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# Enhancing the Performance of Senior Department of Defense Civilian Executives, Reserve Component General/Flag Officers, and Senior Noncommissioned Officers in Joint Matters

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Raymond E. Conley, Ralph Masi, Bernard D. Rostker,  
Herbert J. Shukiar, Steve Drezner

Prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense  
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## Preface

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The events that led to passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 demonstrated the need for active component officers to have deep knowledge of and expertise in joint matters, and today's active-duty military has become progressively more joint. In recent years, our nation's joint military activities have also seen higher participation rates from the reserve component, senior civilians, and senior noncommissioned officers. Thus, the need for "jointness" within these three groups has become increasingly important. Further, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2005 required the Secretary of Defense to submit an assessment of the performance of these three groups in joint matters, as well as an assessment of current initiatives to improve that performance.

The research presented in this report was commissioned by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to help prepare its reports to Congress. Specifically, the report examines the performance of Senior Executive Service (SES) members, senior noncommissioned officers (SNCOs), and reserve component general and flag officers (RC G/FOs) in joint matters. It also identifies initiatives that the services and OSD can pursue to better prepare these personnel for jobs dealing with joint matters. The observations and recommendations presented in this report should be of interest to those involved in the development of senior leaders within the military services, the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

This project was sponsored by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. It was conducted within the Forces and Resources Policy Center of the RAND National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Department of the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community.

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## Summary

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In recent years, there has been increasing recognition that leaders across the Total Force must have greater understanding of the various roles, boundaries, and functions assigned the combatant commanders, other services, combat support agencies, and interagency organizations. General and flag officers, political appointees, and SES members provide the executive leadership that must develop and execute the Department of Defense's (DoD's) strategy for the defense of the nation. Reserve component G/FOs make up over 40 percent of the total G/FO population, and today one in five G/FO billets in joint organizations is filled by RC G/FOs. Senior noncommissioned officers provide the critical link between the enlisted corps and the officer corps, and vice versa. Most SNCOs exercise leadership at tactical and operational levels; however, a select few serve at the highest levels, advising service Secretaries, service Chiefs of Staff, combatant commanders, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on all matters pertaining to the well-being and utilization of the enlisted force.

This report examines the preparation of SES members, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs for participation in joint matters and recommends courses of action to better prepare them for joint positions. After reviewing the existing literature, we conducted interviews to explore the opinions of a select group of senior people who had served at the highest executive levels of DoD and were in positions to observe and evaluate the performance of both military and civilian personnel in terms of their knowledge of and performance in joint matters. We also interviewed a number of senior members who had been identified as being exemplars with respect to participating in joint activities. Using the information gleaned from the interviews and our review of existing research, we developed a number of tentative findings and recommendations. To refine our findings and recommendations, we developed briefings and standardized protocols for use during the focus groups and next round of interviews. Last, having developed our recommendations, we worked with the appropriate OSD staffs to link them to possible initiatives.

The results of the research are presented in Chapters Two, Three, and Four for SES, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs, respectively. Each chapter contains specific recommendations and links them to current—or possibly new—initiatives. The report concludes with four overarching observations and several suggested actions.

## Observations

**Interviewees used similar phrases but in different contexts.** Although each group consisted of different interviewees, they all used similar terms and expressions to describe the critical attributes needed for success in joint matters. As the interviews continued, however, it became clear that those terms could not be detached from the contexts in which they were used—the contexts in which the leaders are expected to excel: the scope of responsibilities, the type of organization, and level of joint activity (strategic, operational, and tactical).

**Joint development is a subset of senior leader development.** Across the three groups, interviewees consistently stressed that a large portion of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that characterize effective leadership in the joint arena is comparable to nonjoint positions, whether within the services or in another component of the DoD. The most important attributes appear transferable from organization to organization and from nonjoint to joint positions. Nevertheless, the interviewees also suggested that senior leaders serving in joint positions needed *additional* competencies that relate to a joint perspective, optimizing joint capability, and the operational and strategic art of joint warfare.

**More senior leaders need training in joint matters.** The lack of purposeful development in joint matters has caused many of these senior leaders to lack appropriate “joint acumen.” Thus, more deliberate mid-career development is needed for prospective SES members, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs to ensure they are properly prepared for joint senior leadership positions. These development programs would include selecting high-potential, mid-career people and providing them appropriate experiences, training and education in joint matters. Also, jointness extends beyond traditional joint organizations. As other research has found for active-duty officers, our research indicates that many SES members, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs outside of joint organizations are engaged in joint matters.

**Systemic obstacles exist.** Although the specific details vary among the three groups studied, each faces systemic obstacles that impede their acquisition of the requisite joint experience, education, and training. The common obstacles are associated with funding, inadequate understanding of concepts for joint development, and the absence of management systems to track and facilitate joint experience.

## Suggested Actions

**Continue with the implementation of current initiatives.** OSD, the Joint Staff, and the services have implemented initiatives designed to improve the performance of SES members, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs in joint matters. Thus, many of the recommendations proposed in this study are already being addressed by initiatives listed below.

The SES initiatives include

- Developing 21st-Century DoD Senior Executive Service Leaders
- Pilot Program for the Recruitment of SES positions in Combatant Commands
- Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP) and DoD Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP)
- Department of Defense National Security Personnel System (NSPS).

The RC G/FO initiatives include

- Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management (JOM) and Joint Professional Military Education (JPME)
- Strategic Plan for Transforming DoD Training Reserve Component JPME Beyond Phase I
- Civilian Employment Information Program.

The SNCO initiatives include

- Senior Enlisted JPME Course
- Keystone Program for Senior Enlisted Leaders.

**Explore the implementation of additional initiatives.** To create a larger pool of joint qualified SES members, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs, we recommend developing additional initiatives in the following areas:

For SES members:

- more joint education and training
- cross-service and interagency assignments.

For RC G/FOs:

- additional options to increase RC JPME beyond Phase I
- improved RC joint career management.

For SNCOs:

- more and earlier (perhaps E-6 but no later than E-8) training in joint matters
- additional opportunities to receive instruction from service academies other than a senior NCO's own service
- exploring the feasibility of instituting a Joint Senior Enlisted Leader Academy
- a review by the services of their respective promotion systems to ensure that they do not inadvertently penalize NCOs who pursue joint experiences

- a centralized mechanism and standardized procedures to identify and facilitate joint rotational opportunities
- establishing broad guidelines to provide the services guidance in preparing SNCOs for joint E-9 leadership positions
- codifying procedures for nominating SNCOs for joint leadership.

**Conduct appropriate cost/benefit analyses.**

## Acknowledgments

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This project would not have been possible without the gracious assistance of the many military and civilian leaders, both retired and currently serving, who generously gave of their time during our interviews and follow-on activities. Because we guaranteed anonymity, we cannot name them. But we greatly appreciate the time, attention, candor, insights, and critiques they provided.

For the SES study, we want to give special acknowledgment to Marilee Fitzgerald, Director of Workforce Issues and International Programs, Office of the Deputy Defense Secretary for Civilian Personnel Policy, for serving as our primary point of contact, helping to arrange access to senior leadership, and providing sage counsel. We also thank Patricia Bradshaw, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy, for her counsel and advice.

For the RC G/FO study, we give special acknowledgment to COL Reginald Geary, Director, Military Personnel Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, for serving as our primary point of contact, helping to arrange access to senior leadership, and providing wise counsel. We thank John Winkler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, for his periodic reviews and advice and LT COL Phyllis (Terri) Wilcox of the Joint Forces Staff College, who was instrumental in providing data on active component and reserve component graduation rates from the Joint and Combined Warfighting School and from the reserve component-exclusive Advanced Joint Professional Military Education blended-learning course.

For the SNCO study, we give special acknowledgment to Bradford Loo, Deputy Director for Programs, Officer and Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Military Personnel Policy), for serving as our primary point of contact, helping to arrange access to the senior leaders, and providing periodic reviews. Also, we thank SGM William J. Gainey, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, for meeting with us several times and providing tremendous insights on the professional development of enlisted personnel for a joint environment. Likewise, we thank SGM Mark S. Rikpa, Command Sergeant Major, U.S. Joint Forces Command, for meeting with us several times and giving us a wealth of information on the professional development of enlisted personnel for a joint environment.

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We have attempted to make the list as complete as possible and we apologize in advance if we have missed anyone.

## Abbreviations

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AC	active component
AJPME	advanced joint professional military education
ASD/RA	Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs
C4	command, control, communication, and computers
C4ISR	command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
CENTCOM	Central Command
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CoCOM	combatant command
CSRA	Civil Service Reform Act
DA	Department of the Army
DL	distance learning
DLAMP	Defense Leadership and Management Program
DMDC	Defense Manpower Data Center
DoD	Department of Defense
ELDP	Executive Leadership Development Program
EUCOM	European Command
G/FO	general/flag officer
ICAF	Industrial College of the Armed Forces
IMA	individual mobilization augmentees
JAEC	Joint Assessment and Enabling Capability
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JCWS	Joint and Combined Warfighting School
JDAL	Joint Duty Assignment List
JDA-R	joint duty assignment–reserve
JERU	Joint European Reserve Unit

JFHQ	Joint Forces Headquarters
JFSC	Joint Forces Staff College
JKDDC	Joint Knowledge Development and Distribution Capability
JNTC	Joint National Training Capability
JOM	joint officer management
JPME	joint professional military education
JQO	joint qualified officer
JQS	Joint Qualification System
JRU	Joint Reserve Unit
JSO	joint specialty officer
JTRU	Joint Transportation Reserve Unit
NCO	noncommissioned officer
NCOIC	noncommissioned officer-in-charge
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NSPS	National Security Personnel System
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PME	professional military education
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RC	reserve component
RCCPDS	Reserve Component Common Personnel Data System
SES	Senior Executive Service
SKAs	skills, knowledge, and abilities
SL	senior leader
SNCO	senior noncommissioned officer
ST	senior scientific/professional
U.S.C.	United States Code
USEUCOM	United States European Command
USJFCOM	United States Joint Forces Command
USTRANSCOM	United States Transportation Command

## Introduction

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Continual threats to our nation's security, finite resources, the global war on terror, asymmetric warfare, and complex interagency and multinational operations are reality for America's military forces. As stated in the 2004 National Military Strategy, "Defeating adaptive adversaries requires flexible, modular and deployable joint forces with the ability to combine the strengths of individual Services, combatant commands, other government agencies and multinational partners" (Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS], 2004, p. 15). This undoubtedly requires joint military capabilities, joint operating concepts, joint functional concepts, and critical enablers adaptable to diverse conditions and objectives. Moreover, it requires well-versed and empowered joint leaders who combine superior technical skills, operational experience, intellectual understanding and cultural expertise to employ joint capabilities and perform critical joint functions (JCS, 2004, p. 16).

Congressional actions, in particular the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986,<sup>1</sup> and numerous research studies (e.g., Robbert et al., 2005; Harrell et al., 2004) have dealt with the preparation and development of active-duty officers for senior joint leadership positions. In recent years, there has been increasing recognition that leaders across the Total Force (active and reserve components, Department of Defense [DoD] civilians, and contractors) must have greater understanding of the various roles, boundaries, and functions assigned the combatant commanders, other services, combat support agencies, and interagency organizations. They must operate in a more collaborative manner and be prepared for a growing range of joint military operations.

For example, along with general and flag officers (G/FOs) and political appointees, members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) provide the executive leadership that must develop and execute DoD's strategy for the defense of the nation. A significant portion of the senior civilian executive corps develops options and oversees the implementation of policies and programs that cut across the services and has profound implications for combatant commanders and joint military operations. SES members participate in the national security interagency process, in which success often requires

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<sup>1</sup> Title IV of the Goldwater Nichols Act mandated specific management policies, promotion objectives, and education and experience requirements for active-duty officers assigned to joint duty assignments.

coordinated actions. The outcome of this process significantly affects subsequent joint and coalition operations.

As another example, the high pace of military operations has drawn heightened attention to the reserve components. Nearly 45 percent of the nation's 2.5 million military personnel are in the reserve components (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2006). That number includes the 280,000 members of the non-drilling Individual Ready Reserves. Similarly, 40 percent of the nation's 1,490 G/FOs are members of the reserve components. The past six years have demonstrated that the reserve components are an important source for trained personnel and are active participants in the full spectrum of challenges to national security. Between September 11, 2001, and February 28, 2005, about 433,000 guard and reserve members were mobilized—the largest mobilization since the Korean War (OSD-RA, 2005). Indeed, today's citizen soldiers, airmen, marines, and sailors are serving around the world in numbers not seen for over 50 years.

Senior noncommissioned officers (SNCOs) provide an additional example. Non-commissioned officers are the metaphoric backbone of the Army. Military forces rely on a disciplined, skilled, dedicated, and professional enlisted corps. SNCOs are the critical link between the enlisted force and the officer corps and vice versa. They are simultaneously trainers, mentors, motivators, disciplinarians, combat leaders, and tacticians. Today, and increasingly in the future, SNCOs operate in an environment in which they work closely with their sister services and with coalition members.<sup>2</sup> Most are expected to exercise leadership at tactical and operational levels, but a select few serve at the highest levels, advising service Secretaries, service Chiefs of Staff, combatant commanders, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) on all matters pertaining to the well-being and utilization of the enlisted force.

These examples are illustrative of an emerging theme—more people need to be trained, educated, and experienced in joint matters. A 2003 research study, citing the demand for horizontal integration of capabilities at strategic, operational, and tactical levels, found that an “increasing number of people (including RC [reserve component] officers, junior grade officers, noncommissioned officers [NCOs], and civilians) are involved in joint matters, and they will need knowledge, skills, abilities, and other qualities not needed by their predecessors” (Booz Allen Hamilton, 2003). As succinctly stated in the National Military Strategy (JCS, 2004, p. iv), “enhancing joint warfighting requires the integration of our Active and Reserve Components and our civilian work force to create a seamless Total Force that can meet future challenges.”

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<sup>2</sup> In recognition of the expanding joint operating environment, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs issued policy directive CJCSI 1805.01 (JCS, 2005c). This directive calls for the services to incorporate joint topics into their existing enlisted professional military education (PME) programs and establishes two chairman-sponsored enlisted joint PME programs for enlisted service members assigned, or slated to be assigned, to joint billets.

## Purpose of This Report

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2005, Section 531(e) required the Secretary of Defense to:

... submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives, as a follow-on to the report under subsection (d), a report providing an assessment of, and initiatives to improve, the performance in joint matters of the following:

- (1) Senior civilian officers and employees in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Defense Agencies, and the military departments.
- (2) Senior noncommissioned officers.
- (3) Senior leadership in the reserve components.

The research presented in this report was commissioned by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to help prepare these reports to the Congress. Specifically, the research examines the performance of SES members, SNCOs, and RC G/FOs in joint matters and identifies initiatives that the services and OSD can pursue to better prepare them for jobs dealing with joint matters.

## Organization of the Report

The report has six chapters and two supporting appendixes. This chapter provides background information and Chapter Two summarizes our research methodology. The next three chapters present the results of our research for members of the SES, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs, respectively. Chapter Six presents our overall observations and suggested actions.



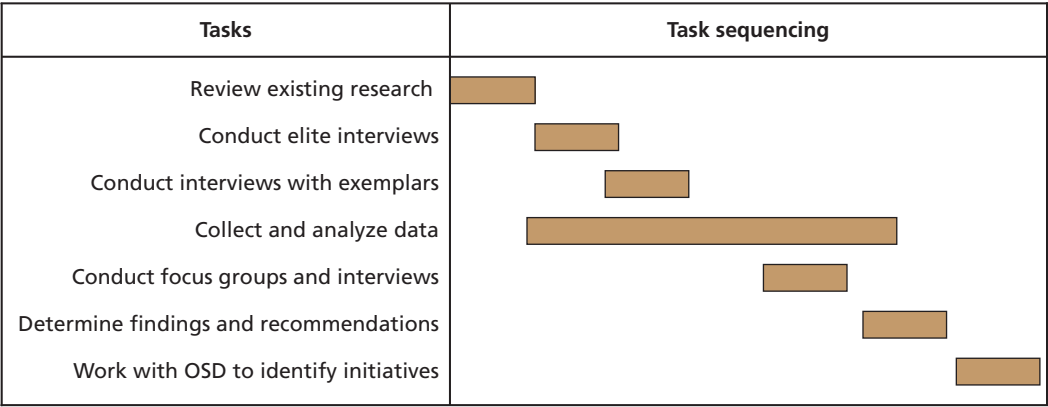
# Research Methodology

Although the research was conducted by three teams, the teams all followed the same methodology. Figure 2.1 provides an overview of the major steps used to collect information on performance in joint matters and to identify ways to improve that performance.

Each study team first undertook a literature review to identify existing research and to determine what is currently known about the performance of its subject area (SES, SNCO, RC G/FO) in joint matters and to determine what information should be collected during the interview phases of the research.

The teams then developed similar protocols to explore the opinions of select groups of interviewees.<sup>1</sup> For the SES research, the interviewees included senior people who had served at the highest executive levels of DoD and were in a position to observe and evaluate the performance of both military and SES members in terms of their

**Figure 2.1**  
**Major Research Tasks**



RAND MG621-2.1

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A contains a copy of the protocols for the first series of interviews.

knowledge of, and performance in, joint matters. Those interviewed included several former Deputy Secretaries of Defense, several former Under Secretaries of Defense, a former Vice Chairman of the Joint Staff, a former service Chief of Staff, and a former Combatant Command Commander, as well as a number of Principal Deputies and Assistant Under Secretaries.

For the RC G/FO research, the interviewees included former Combatant Command Commanders, commanders of DoD agencies, directors of Joint Staff directorates, advisers to the CJCS, and a school commandant. They were selected because they had been or were in positions to observe and evaluate the performance of senior officers in the active and reserve components.

For the SNCO research, the senior-level interviewees included G/FOs, the enlisted adviser to CJCS, current and former enlisted advisers to the service chiefs, and current and former enlisted advisers to combatant command commanders. These interviewees were selected because of the positions they hold or had held and because they have been at the forefront of developing various programs to improve the performance of SNCOs in joint matters.

Given the seniority of the people interviewed, we called them the “elite” interviewees. We asked them to identify traits and competencies that they associated with “great” performers, as compared with those that they judged to be only “good” performers.<sup>2</sup> We also asked about the role of joint experience, training, and education in the development of SES members, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs, as appropriate.

We used the same protocols when we interviewed “exemplars.” OSD and Joint Staff members and several elite interviewees identified people as being “outstanding” examples of the targeted population with respect to joint matters. These exemplar interviews basically corroborated the information and insights that we gained from the elite interviews. The teams conducted 20 elite and exemplar interviews for the SES research, 13 for the RC G/FOs, and 22 for the SNCOs.

Next, using the information gleaned during the interviews and review of existing research, each team developed a number of tentative findings and recommendations. To refine its findings and recommendations, each team developed a briefing and standardized protocol for use during its focus groups and next round of interviews.<sup>3</sup> During this phase of the research, each team asked a broad cross-section of senior members from its study population to comment on the insights and recommendations that had been developed.

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<sup>2</sup> This distinction helped the interviewees home in on the most important traits, competencies, and attributes needed in joint senior leaders.

<sup>3</sup> Because of scheduling difficulties, a focus group was not conducted for the SES research. Appendix B contains a copy of the protocol for the second series of interviewees.

Simultaneously, each team collected additional data relating to the basic demographics of the targeted population. Last, having developed recommendations, the teams then worked with the appropriate OSD staffs to link them to possible initiatives.

This methodology relied primarily on interview techniques to garner information. Those interviews provided both contextual information and the ability to probe more deeply into the meaning of various responses. The methodology was designed not to provide a quantitative evaluation but to capture and reflect the perspectives of current and former senior officials in DoD. If more quantitative and definitive assessments are required, they will be the subject of other research efforts.

Also, it is important to remember that our recommendations were not subjected to cost/benefit analyses. Such analyses were beyond the scope of this research but would be an appropriate next step.



## **Enhancing Career Senior Executive Service Members' Performance in Joint Matters**

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As noted in the introduction, the evolving nature of modern military operations will increasingly require DoD's senior leaders, including its SES members, to perform effectively in multiservice, multinational, and interagency environments. Accordingly, OSD and the services must address a critical question: how best to develop SES members for inherently joint matters? In this chapter, we outline answers to that question by synthesizing the interviewees' perceptions of SES performance in joint matters, cataloging their recommendations on how to enhance future performance, and linking ongoing and potential new initiatives to the recommendations.

This chapter explores the competencies career SES members should possess for successful performance in joint matters. Given those competencies, we then discuss the requisite mid-career and early SES experiences, education, and training that might facilitate them. The chapter concludes with a discussion of systemic obstacles and impediments prior to presenting the recommendations.

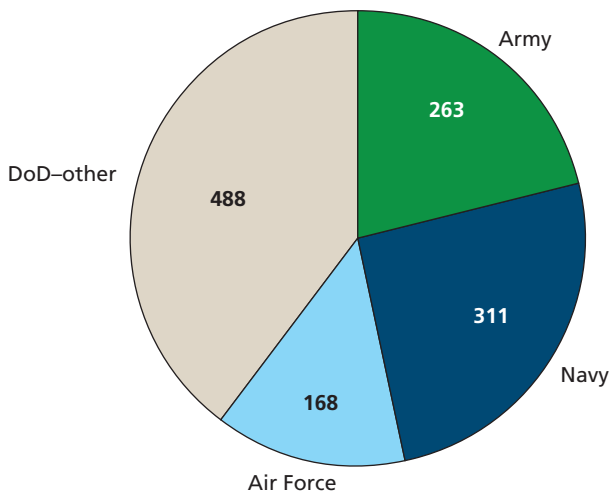
### **DoD Senior Executive Service Population**

The SES is a significant and important portion of DoD's executive leadership team. In August 2006, there were 1,230 SES members in the various departments, agencies, and activities (Figure 3.1). As shown in Figure 3.2, there were 894 active-duty G/FOs.<sup>1</sup> Thus, there were 38 percent more SES members in DoD than active-duty G/FOs. Moreover, SES members are influential leaders in departmental headquarters, major command headquarters, combatant command headquarters, and defense agencies and activities. They develop policies and procedures that influence how the Department accomplishes its missions. They lead organizations that acquire and maintain the weapon systems employed by the combatant commands.

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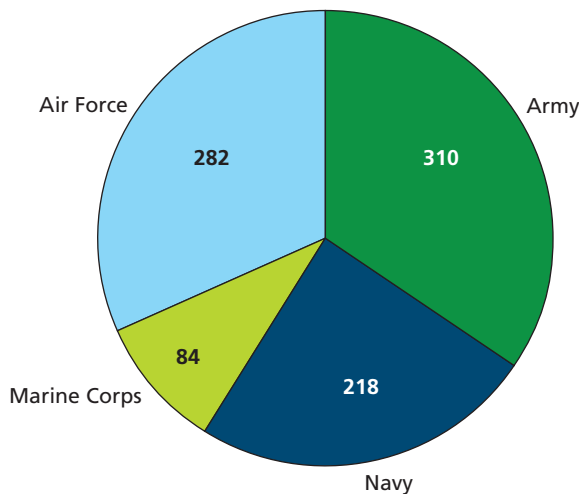
<sup>1</sup> As of July 2006, there were also about 600 G/FOs in the reserves. They are not included in this total.

**Figure 3.1**  
**DoD Senior Executive Service Members, by Service**



SOURCE: Defense Civilian Personnel Data System Extract, August 2006.  
RAND MG621-3.1

**Figure 3.2**  
**Active-Duty General and Flag Officers, by Service**



SOURCE: Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) Database, as of July 2006.  
RAND MG621-3.2

The equivalent of a Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL) does not exist for SES members; nonetheless, they serve in an array of positions that require a joint perspective and could benefit from some of the experiences and education associated with joint development. SES members serving on the OSD staff formulate policy options and provide oversight for programs that apply across DoD, including but not limited to the military services, the JCS, and the combatant commands. SES members are key leaders in agencies providing direct support to the combatant commands, as well as to the military services. These include, but are not restricted to, agencies that plan, develop, and operate critical joint command, control, communication, and computer (C4) systems; safeguard the United States and its allies from weapons of mass destruction by providing capabilities to reduce, eliminate, and counter the threat and to mitigate its effects; and provide logistic support and services across DoD. Increasingly, SES members within the services are managing and leading such activities as acquisition, logistics, and personnel management, and must consider policy implications not only for their respective services but for the combatant commands as well.

## **Competencies Needed for Success in Joint Matters**

The interviewees were unanimous in suggesting that SES members serving in joint positions must be leaders who are highly competent, adaptive, and innovative and who have been tested in a variety of organizations. Furthermore, they pointed out that this is not restricted to those working on joint matters but should apply to all career SES members serving DoD.

### **Most Competencies for Successful Performance in the Joint Arena Are Similar to Those for Nonjoint Positions**

SES jobs in the joint environment, like their correlates in a service environment, are fundamentally leadership positions. SES members must be able to communicate, motivate, plan, implement, and identify and constructively utilize the capabilities of their organizations and agencies. Despite the variety of contexts from which the leaders we interviewed drew their observations, all repeatedly emphasized the value of personal characteristics, leadership, and management skills.<sup>2</sup>

The interviewees ascribed the following major attributes to “great” SES members in joint matters:

- broad perspectives rooted in breadth of experiences
- strong leadership skills
- ability to build and maintain key relationships

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<sup>2</sup> Personal characteristics include such attributes as loyalty, results-driven, broad perspective, and intro-spectiveness.

- ability to learn on the job
- ability to think about mission in both horizontal and vertical dimensions
- orientation toward results.

Although the interviews were designed to glean information about SES members involved in joint matters, each interviewee stressed that overall preparation and development of the SES corps is essential—and joint matters are a subset of that process. They repeatedly stressed that the most important attributes were transferable from job to job, organization to organization, and nonjoint to joint position. As they related the attributes to specific types of jobs, they commonly used such phrases as “has a sense of public responsibility,” “takes initiative,” “thinks critically and creatively,” “possesses analytical skills,” “has a quick mind,” “manages large amount of information,” “anticipates second- and third-order effects,” and “exercises sound judgment.” Similarly, organization and people-leading skills, such as having a vision, communicating well, taking care of people, inspiring and motivating people, developing subordinates, and mobilizing resources, were repeatedly mentioned. Collaborative skills, such as team building, negotiating, and trust, were mentioned as vital.

### **SES Members Working in Joint Matters Also Need a Joint Perspective and Joint Knowledge**

When the interviewees differentiated SES positions dealing with joint matters from others, they most often cited greater complexity and additional dimensions as the major differences. As one interviewee stated, “Dimensions of the issues are different. The complexity of OSD and joint issues is not the sum of its four parts; the complexity is greater than that. Effective OSD SESs have to understand and effectively deal with this greater complexity.” With respect to “getting results,” many indicated it was also important to have an appreciation for the various cultures. Summing up several interviewees’ comments: To “get results” across the Department means understanding how OSD, the Joint Staff, the combatant commands, and the services operate.

Typically the interviewees addressed this area in two ways. First, they called for SES members to appreciate the capabilities of the military services. Appreciating the various capabilities provided by each of the services helps the individual generate a more complete range of options to address an issue, problem, policy, and/or opportunity. A paraphrase of one interviewee’s comments summarizes this nicely: The very best often have a breadth of experience that may include, for example, a mix of Air Force— and Army-relevant experience in key jobs. Second, virtually all interviewees noted that the joint arena is not the place for service parochialism. Both in OSD and on the Joint Staff, it is important to have a broad DoD-wide perspective and to generate nonparochial options that may cut across service and functional boundaries.

## Requisite Experiences, Education, and Training

While the interviewees indicated that SES members are generally top performers, they stressed that the lack of purposeful development has caused many to be too narrowly focused and to lack “joint savvy.” *All* interviewees had recommendations concerning the types of jobs, education, and training potential SES members needed in mid-career and shortly after being selected to the SES.

### What Potential SES Candidates Need in Mid-Career

When describing what was most needed by people with the potential to become members of the SES corps, there was a common theme: the chance to develop and build their skills and competencies. The categories of mid-career experiences mentioned most often were broadening, education and training, and mentoring.

**Broad Experience.** The interviewees indicated that people at GS-13 through GS-15 with the potential to become members of the SES need breadth in their job-related experiences. That breadth may be acquired by serving in different organizations within and between services. Examples include serving in one or more of the military departments prior to entering the OSD arena; serving in multiple functional areas, such as logistics and acquisition; and spending time outside DoD, on Capitol Hill, or in other parts of the Executive Branch. It is even possible to provide some breadth by purposely rotating people within large organizations.

The interviewees emphasized—and it cannot be stressed too strongly—that breadth of experience was the most important enabler for being able to adopt a broader, more strategic perspective. Many commented that breadth of experience equipped SES members to see and understand how the actions of their organization fit into the larger picture. It gives them a better appreciation of how to align the activities of their organization with broader operational and strategic goals and objectives.

**Education and Training.** Several interviewees discussed the importance of lifelong learning, including the benefits that accrue from attending the in-residence professional military education (PME) courses. Several reasons were given for encouraging and supporting high-potential GS-13 to GS-15 attendance at PME courses. PME courses help future leaders gain a deeper understanding of the processes involved in developing and allocating resources to support the National Security and National Military Strategies. They help educate leaders, both military and civilian, on the development and employment of the various instruments of power in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment. Notwithstanding the importance of training and education, however, interviewees cautioned that these should be considered additions to experience that can only be gained on the job: Education and training are not substitutes for job experience.

**Mentoring.** As one interviewee observed, mentors help people see things in ways they might not have thought about. By sharing their knowledge and leadership insights,

mentors help subordinates understand how organizations operate. Additionally, the interviewees suggested that leaders should be encouraged to guide civilian employees in grades GS-13 through GS-15 with potential to become SES members by assessing their potential and providing opportunities for them to develop their capabilities.

### **What Is Needed After Selection into the Senior Executive Service**

The comments may be grouped into two broad categories: clarity of role and executive-level education.

**Clarity of Role.** Several interviewees suggested that DoD sends mixed messages about its expectations for SES members. In some cases, they are considered flexible, highly skilled managers who can be placed into almost any leadership position. In other cases, SES members are valued for their technical expertise and serve as a source of continuity amid the more frequent turnover of political appointees and G/FOs. Clarifying which jobs need more technical expertise and which require less technical expertise but more leadership and management expertise would help in workforce management. Equally important, it would help DoD and the individuals themselves establish and realize expectations. Some interviewees observed that one of the original goals of the SES was to improve the management of the government by developing a cadre of highly competent senior executives with leadership and managerial expertise. A few indicated it would be difficult in many cases to determine the relative weight between technical and more general leadership and management skills. All interviewees thought it was important for DoD to determine what it wants and values in its SES, communicate it, measure it, and enforce it. This should include what it means to be “joint” in the SES context.

**Executive-Level Education.** The APEX orientation course was frequently cited as essential for newly selected SES members. Revamped during 2002, this course is the civilian counterpart to the military’s CAPSTONE program for G/FOs. The current objectives for APEX are as follows:

- Establish jointness as the approach for interaction among OSD, the military departments, defense agencies, DoD field activities, and the private sector, thereby integrating SES responsibilities with DoD component priorities.
- Operationalize the SES role in DoD transformation.
- Provide an overview of DoD structure and processes critical to its operation.
- Provide experiences that expand participants’ leadership and strategic thinking skills in the DoD context.
- Provide structured networking opportunities with military and civilian colleagues, to reinforce information-sharing across functional areas.

Additionally, specifically tailored courses should be available as SES members continue their careers. At a minimum, these courses should include topics relating to

national security, public policymaking, strategic leadership, and strategic-level management. Lifelong learning should not stop as the person goes up the hierarchy.

### **Systemic Obstacles and Impediments**

We asked the interviewees if they had observed or experienced any systemic factors that, in their judgment, impeded the acquisition of the requisite experience, education, and training. Specific points highlighted as obstacles include

- lack of sufficient resources
- multiple career management structures
- an appraisal and bonus system that encourages stovepiping
- mindsets that discourage developmental and rotation assignments
- a poorly understood development concept.

We discuss each point below.

**Lack of Sufficient Resources.** An example of insufficient resources is the lack of money in student pipeline accounts to help offset the loss of workdays while civilians are attending longer training courses, such as PME. However, the interviewees stressed that the biggest problem has been lack of senior leadership commitment. Several examples were cited to illustrate that appropriate local-level leadership commitment could overcome resource constraints. By implication, if DoD's senior leadership had made similar commitments, extant resource constraints, including funding constraints, would have been mitigated.

**Multiple Career Management Structures.** Although there is every reason to expect that there is an abundance of highly talented and innovative mid-grade and senior civilians, they often must navigate a maze of rules and procedures that few people understand to find appropriate opportunities. The example was given of a person who spent a large portion of his career in one service and was selected for a joint position in a combatant command that had another service as its executive agent. Near the end of his tour in the combatant command, neither the SES members nor the respective services were certain about who owned him and was responsible for assisting with his follow-on job.

The maze of rules and different procedures inhibits professional development and discourages movement between the services.

**Stovepiping Encouraged by Appraisal and Bonus System.** Currently, many high-potential employees choose not to seek placements outside of their immediate offices because that is where and how their performances are measured. The appraisal and bonus system generally rewards staying in one's stovepipe rather than broadening out of it. There are few near-term incentives for civilians to take time away from their organizations to participate in developmental assignments. At the GS-13 through GS-15 grades, the system encourages the use of technical expertise and often rewards

specialization rather than broad management skills. This perception of the system is reinforced because eligibility for these mid-level jobs usually requires candidates who already have the necessary technical knowledge, skills, and abilities to be competitive.

**Mindsets That Discourage Developmental and Rotation Assignments.** Quite naturally, organizations want to keep their best and brightest talent. As a consequence, some managers, in an effort to ensure that the mission gets accomplished, are reluctant to let good people go for developmental outplacements. They simply want to hang onto good people for a long, long time. This organizational mindset is often detrimental to grooming and building talent for the future.

Another detrimental mindset is the reluctance of high-potential employees to rotate for developmental purposes. Sometimes this reluctance is related to perceived status changes. One interviewee commented that movement from an OSD-level position to a service position could be perceived by some as a loss of prestige, even though the change would provide the person additional competencies and a broader perspective. Another reason related to the appraisal and bonus system as discussed above is the potential loss of award money.

**Poorly Understood Development Concept.** The current civil service system has largely been based on seniority and experience within somewhat clearly defined stovepipes. As a consequence, the concept of broad development is not well understood in the civil service context. Similarly, DoD has not done a good job of communicating what it needs and values in its more senior civilians. Thus, there has been little alternative but to resort to “ad-hocracy.”

## Recommendations for Enhancing Senior Civilian Performance in Joint Matters

Given the interviewees’ perceptions of the performance of SES members in joint matters, we now summarize their recommendations to enhance SES performance. Enhancing SES performance across DoD emerged as the sine qua non for improving SES performance in joint matters. The interviewees’ recommendations are grouped into three areas: SES management, selections and assignments, and education and training.

### Senior Executive Service Management

Although directives exist establishing various responsibilities, a deliberate approach for wholesale-level SES management was not apparent to the interviewees.<sup>3</sup> Wholesale-level SES management would include monitoring workforce health, assessing and communicating current and future workforce needs, and succession planning for key

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<sup>3</sup> We note the recent establishment of the Joint Leader Development Division as part of the Civilian Personnel Management System (CPMS). See the CPMS Web site.

positions. The activities would include determining DoD's strategic goals and objectives; identifying current and future senior leader gaps associated with those goals and objectives; and formulating policies, practices, and programs to close the gaps. Working with the realities of the current largely decentralized system, the interviewees made several specific recommendations.

*Determine what DoD values and wants in its senior civilian executives.* The interviewees recommended that DoD define the skills and abilities that are most valued in senior civilian executives and then identify, incentivize, and reward those who cultivate, pursue, and demonstrate them. The Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA) of 1978 "envisioned a senior executive corps with solid executive expertise, public service values, and a broad perspective of government" (Office of Personnel Management [OPM], 2004, p. 1).<sup>4</sup> Although some current SES billets require senior-level people, they are not executive positions as set out in the CSRA. These jobs place greater emphasis on technical and/or professional expertise than on a broad perspective of government and overall executive leadership and managerial skills. The interviewees recognize that some SES jobs will require technical and/or professional knowledge but, even in those cases, greater weight should be given to the broad prospective and executive leadership and managerial skills. According to OPM guidelines, "the SES was intended to be a corps of senior executives not technical experts. In determining whether a position meets the criteria for placement in the SES, the agency needs to evaluate the position and determine if it functions as a part of the management team, or as an independent advisor or technical expert" (OPM, 2004, p. 6). Accordingly, the more technical positions need to be distinguished from the more general ones by more effectively using the existing categories: SES, Senior Leader (SL), and Senior Scientific/Professional (ST).

*Clarify what is meant by "joint" in the SES context.* To improve the performance of SES members in joint matters, it is important to clarify the roles for SES members as they relate to joint matters. Because the various criteria for jointness have been officer-centered, they have been less defined for others, making it difficult to properly prepare senior civilians. Many interviewees suggested that some aspects of the officer approach are instructive for defining jointness in the SES context. For example, several key senior career civilian executive positions probably exist for which prior multiservice experiences would be extremely beneficial. Likewise, several SES positions dealing with interagency activities probably exist for which prior joint PME and/or an interagency assignment would be very beneficial. The interviewees indicated that this will be even more important as DoD continues to migrate from separate military service concepts of operation to joint and combined operations.

*Centralize "management" of a subset of the SES positions.* Management is in quotation marks because it is not meant to connote ownership. The interviewees believe it is possible to create a structure for managing a subset of the SES positions across DoD

<sup>4</sup> See OPM (2004), pp. 1–3, for more discussion of the backgrounds and goals for the SES.

that produces flow and opportunities for development but does not indicate centralized ownership of those positions—they would still belong to the respective component. Initially, this subset of SES positions should include those in unified combatant commands and select positions in OSD, the Joint Staff, and DoD agencies. There would be more personalized management of the people flowing into and out of these positions. A central office, perhaps at OSD, would set policies, establish expectations, and measure progress. At a minimum, the policies would address qualifications, frequency of rotation, procedures for selecting and hiring into these positions, and placement of the people when they leave the positions. One objective for managing this subset of positions is to develop a pool of candidates who would be ready for ever-increasing responsibilities and would be recognized candidates for various succession plans.

*Make the most critical SES positions more desirable.* Given the caps on pay, the interviewees suggested exploring nonmonetary benefits to bolster the status of SES members in more-critical positions. One suggestion is to make these positions more competitive by establishing a system in which career people are periodically vetted and assessed for these positions by a multiservice, civilian-military panel. Also, given the importance of symbols, SES members in these critical positions should receive more ceremonial benefits as an indication of their status.

### **Selections and Assignments**

Although DoD has the ability to bring people in laterally, the interviewees felt strongly that DoD should have a development, selection, and assignment system that ensures that adequate numbers of people—at the right level, in the right career, and doing the right things—are available to meet the corporate leadership needs. The selection and assignment recommendations follow.

*Identify potential future SES members at mid-career and provide appropriate developmental opportunities.* To acquire the requisite breadth of experience, high-potential senior GS-13 through GS-15 members should be given appropriate developmental opportunities. The interviewees did not indicate that new programs were required, just that existing programs should be used more effectively. It was their general opinion that programs such as the Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP) were not given enough support, including funding.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to formal programs such as DLAMP, guidance and provisions are needed to cultivate less-formal development programs. This guidance should help high-potential employees and their mentors understand the qualities needed for success in the SES. The guidance should advise them about what types of experience and education would facilitate the development of these qualities. Organizations should have the ability to give their best people opportunities to broaden their experience base. This

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<sup>5</sup> DLAMP is designed to prepare selected high-potential individuals to be innovative, flexible, and agile leaders, able to work alongside their military counterparts to achieve the DoD mission.

may require some slack in the organizations. For example, prior to the manpower cuts of the 1990s, having both directors and deputies made it possible to get the job done while affording opportunities for broadening. Perhaps it is time to restore a few deputy positions for developmental purposes.

*Select people into SES based on their potential to serve in a variety of positions, not just the immediate opening.* The interviewees offered the opinion that most SES members were probably selected because of their fit with a specific opening. This often results in greater weight being given to the technical or subject-matter expertise associated with that position. If DoD values breadth of experience, it should give greater consideration to how potential SES members would fit in an array of positions. The interviewees did not advocate elevating the hiring decisions for SES entry positions. Instead, they suggested communicating expectations and promulgating broad guidance that would be used in the recruiting and hiring process.

*Develop a rotation program that broadens the individual's perspective and ultimately enhances development of the executive talent pool.* Currently, there is no generally understood construct for what job rotations are appropriate and what specific benefits accrue to DoD. In establishing the policies for a rotation program, the emphasis should be on the intended outcomes, i.e., on broadening individual perspectives and creating an executive talent pool that has more of an enterprise-wide perspective. The policies should allow for rotations to occur through a variety of experiences, such as short- and long-term temporary or developmental assignments, in addition to job changes within and across service lines, across disciplines, and across government agencies. Rotations with departments such as State, Treasury, Commerce, Justice, Energy, Homeland Security, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) could improve interagency operations and enhance overall performance in joint matters.

*Encourage mobility.* Mobility within and among the services, defense agencies, functions, and/or programs provides breadth and, at times, depth while promoting continuous learning. Requiring senior civilian executives to change jobs periodically, as is done with military leaders, serves two purposes: It broadens the executive's perspective and brings different ideas and insights into the organization or program. Also, it often facilitates the dissemination and cross-fertilization of innovative ideas and creative solutions. Mobility does not necessarily mean geographic movement. The vast majority of DoD's senior civilian executive positions, over 80 percent, are in the Washington, D.C., area.<sup>6</sup>

*Establish a system that facilitates career planning.* SES members typically fend for themselves when planning their career assignments and developmental opportunities. This places an inordinate weight on the skills associated with personal career planning instead of the competencies that may be more beneficial to DoD. The envisioned career

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<sup>6</sup> This area includes Arlington, Fairfax, Alexandria, Fort Belvoir, Falls Church, Springfield, and Rosslyn, Virginia; and Fort Meade, Maryland.

planning system should help SES members match their competencies with DoD's current and projected needs and generate a larger pool of prospective candidates.

### Education and Training

Education and training are two important pillars for executive development. The interviewees stressed that it was important to phase these development opportunities so that they complemented the sequence of jobs. Formal education and training opportunities put tools in the toolkit; however, skill with the tools is acquired by using them in handling real-world problems and implementing solutions. The education and training recommendations are listed below.

*Encourage and promote continual learning opportunities.* Continually increasing the breadth and depth of one's knowledge, skills, and abilities is essential for executive success and is often cited as a critical leadership competency.<sup>7</sup> Continual learning affords an ever-expanding foundation of individual capabilities and competencies. The interviewees recommended that high-potential GS-13 through GS-15 and SES members be encouraged and given regular opportunities to pursue education, training, or other opportunities for learning and development.

*Improve access to SES entry-level training.* As noted earlier, the APEX orientation course was often mentioned as being essential for newly selected SES members. The course is offered twice a year, with approximately 30 people in each class. Several interviewees recommended exploring efforts to improve the timing and coordination of attendance so that most SES members could attend within their first year as opposed to their first two years.

*Invest in joint professional military education (JPME) for civilians.* Those individuals with the highest potential for becoming SES members should be sent to in-residence JPME. Both potential SES members and DoD would benefit from their being educated on strategic and institutional leadership, national security strategy, national resource management, information operations, and joint and multinational campaign planning and warfighting operations. While some of these topics have distinctly operational components, the experiences that the potential SES members will get and their association with senior military officers should serve them well during their SES careers.

*Encourage informal mentoring.* The objective is to develop people by helping to identify their strengths and weaknesses and tying them to their career aspirations and DoD's needs. Equipped with knowledge about DoD's current and future needs, mentors could help high-potential people find challenging jobs that would allow them to contribute in meaningful ways while continuing to develop and build their skills. The interviewees did not suggest creating an elaborate, formal program. Instead, citing examples of effective, less-formal programs, they recommended encouraging men-

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<sup>7</sup> Continual learning and its variants are included among competencies listed in the various service and joint leader models.

toring by disseminating information about DoD's future needs, expectations, and opportunities.

The common refrain throughout the recommendations is for DoD to determine what it wants from its senior civilian executives and implement programs to develop and reward it. Implementing these management, selection and assignment, and education and training recommendations should further enhance the performance of senior civilians throughout the Department, including those serving in joint matters.

## Initiatives to Produce More-Effective SES Members

As expressed in several documents (DoD, 2006a, 2006b, and 2006c) DoD is committed to continually improving the systems and processes it uses to develop its executive leaders. This includes ensuring that SES members have the appropriate competencies in joint matters. Prior to proposing areas for new initiatives, we felt it important to review ongoing initiatives that may address the interviewees' recommendations.

### Current Initiatives

We found that several recently started or reinvigorated initiatives are consistent with the interviewees' recommendations for SES management and SES selections and assignments.

**Developing 21st Century DoD Senior Executive Service Leaders.** This is a DoD-wide initiative to ensure appropriate executive leadership competencies, knowledge of joint matters, and a transparent, credible, and effective framework for the career life cycle management of civilian executives and those in the pipeline for SES positions (Bradshaw, 2006). The framework would create separate career tracks for management generalists and technical experts and reassign senior executives more often among different agencies. It is based on the Defense Business Board's recommendations to broaden the expertise of senior civilian executives so they can more easily shift to new roles (Defense Business Board, 2006).<sup>8</sup> By creating a general management cadre within the senior executive corps and enhancing training and development opportunities for all SES members, DoD plans to produce the best possible career SES leadership cadre. Several human capital management principles are embedded in this initiative:

- Institute a deliberate, systematic, and predictable approach to management of the career life cycles of all DoD career SES leaders.
- Establish an executive management framework for the career life cycles of select SES positions that are considered to be the most influential and mission critical.

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<sup>8</sup> The report provides recommendations regarding better utilization and overall executive selection, development, performance pay, and retention of the Senior Executive Service in the Department of Defense.

- Maintain a pipeline of highly qualified SES leaders who will be developed, sustained, and continuously improved to meet DoD executive leadership requirements.

*Developing 21st Century DoD Senior Executive Service Leaders* encapsulates the essence of several recommendations discussed in this report: (1) determine what DoD values and wants in its senior civilian executives, (2) select people into the senior executive corps based on their potential to serve in a variety of positions rather than the immediate opening, (3) develop a rotation program that broadens the individual's perspective and ultimately enhances development of the executive talent pool, (4) encourage mobility, and (5) identify potential future SES members at mid-career and provide appropriate developmental opportunities.

**Pilot Program for the Recruitment of Senior Executive Service Positions in the Combatant Commands.** DoD is conducting a pilot program to test the concept of *centralized* recruitment and assignment for career SES positions located in the ten combatant commands (CoCOMs) (see DoD, 2006e). Prior to this initiative, each CoCOM's executive agent was in charge of the recruitment, assignment, and other human-resource activities for these positions. During the 2006 biennial review of SES positions, ten new positions were approved for the CoCOMs. Since these positions were unfilled, they provided an opportunity to test the new approach for managing CoCOM SES positions. The test includes position classification, recruitment, and selection. It does not change performance management practices, including coverage by the Executive Agent's Performance Review Board. Similarly, the servicing payroll offices and other aspects of financial management are not changed. To ensure that the right talent is selected for these positions, the CJCS, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and other appropriate senior officials will be involved in the identification and selection of individuals for this subset of career SES positions.

This pilot program brings together three of the interviewees' recommendations: (1) clarify what is meant by *joint* in the SES context, (2) centralize "management" of a subset of the SES positions, and (3) make the most critical SES positions more desirable.

**Defense Leadership and Management Program and DoD Executive Leadership Development Program.** DLAMP was established in 1997 and revised extensively in 2002. The revised program provides a framework for developing a cadre of mid-career civilians with DoD-wide capabilities; substantive knowledge of national security; strong leadership and management skills; joint perspectives for managing the Department's workforce and programs; and shared understanding, trust, and sense of mission with military counterparts. The goal is to increase the participants' potential to serve in key senior civilian executive positions throughout the Department. DLAMP's core elements include

- an advanced degree from an accredited institution
- graduate courses in business management and public policy areas (based on an individual needs assessment)
- PME (senior level)
- leadership courses designed to enhance executive core qualifications
- developmental assignment (highly encouraged).

The DoD Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) was established in 1985 and is periodically updated. It is designed for highly motivated DoD employees who have demonstrated outstanding leadership potential. Its objectives are to promote greater understanding of DoD's missions and cultures and to provide leadership training. During the ten-month program, the participants get extensive exposure to DoD's roles and missions, travel to several locations in the United States and overseas to train with the warfighters, and take part in seminars on defense and foreign affairs. Through hands-on field experience, participants experience first hand the many challenges encountered in carrying out DoD's missions. Each class consists of approximately 60 participants in grades GS/GM 12–14, including up to six military officers at the level of major or lieutenant commander.

The project sponsors indicated that these programs and others will be periodically reviewed to ensure that they provide appropriately tailored training and education to help prepare a cadre of potential future senior civilian leaders who will excel in the joint, Total Force environment. These programs would be key components of an overarching initiative akin to the interviewees' recommendation that potential future SES members be identified at mid-career and provided appropriate developmental opportunities.

**DoD National Security Personnel System (NSPS).** The Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 NDAA provided DoD authority permitting significant flexibility for designing an NSPS, allowing for a new framework of rules, regulations, and processes to govern how defense civilian employees are hired, compensated, promoted, and disciplined (NDAA, 2003). Several changes envisioned under NSPS could make it easier to implement some of the interviewees' recommendations. For example, NSPS provides flexibility for employees to move more freely across a range of work opportunities without being bound by narrowly defined jobs. Under NSPS, the employees qualify for jobs just as they did under the GS system. They must demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and/or competencies necessary to be successful in the new job. But NSPS offers more flexibility in moving to other positions because of the grouping of occupations into broader career groups, pay schedules, and pay bands. Under NSPS, each job fits into one of four career groups: standard, scientific and engineering, medical, and investigative and protective services. These career groups are divided into three or four pay schedules that are divided, in turn, into up to four broad pay bands. Employees are no longer bound by narrow work definitions tied to discrete grade levels

but may move within broad pay bands. Instead of competing for jobs at every grade level, they only compete for jobs at a higher pay band.

As another example, NSPS encourages an environment of open, two-way communication between employees and their supervisor. Employees and supervisors are expected to talk about current and future work goals, the employees' accomplishments, and their opportunities to excel and use their talents. This knowledge should help facilitate career planning and mentoring.

These two examples exemplify ways NSPS may help mitigate barriers such as stovepiping and the reluctance to pursue rotational assignments. Similarly, these examples illustrate how NSPS could help facilitate the recommendations relating to improved career planning and increased mobility.

### **Future Initiatives to Explore**

The implementation of the current initiatives will consume most of the Department's effort for the next few years. However, based on discussions with the research sponsor, the Department should continue to explore the feasibility of additional initiatives in two areas: joint education and training and cross-service assignments.

**Joint Education and Training.** DoD (2006d, p. 5) states:

To address the impact of the capabilities-based approach on individuals, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has instituted a continuum for lifelong learning that addresses training, education, experience, and self-development throughout a career from entry to senior levels to ensure that individuals have received joint knowledge in time for joint duties. At present, the continuum applies to the development of joint officers. Lifelong learning and its continuum must expand to address all personnel throughout the Total Force, including enlisted personnel, members of the Reserve component, DoD civilians, and contractors.

To effectively develop the pool of future SES members skilled in joint matters, joint education and training opportunities need to be more formally integrated in the development plans for high-potential mid-grade employees.

**Cross-Service and Interagency Assignments.** The interviewees noted that, to acquire the requisite breadth of experience, some of the high-potential senior GS-13 through GS-15 members should be given appropriate cross-service or interagency developmental opportunities. Several considered this as a key aspect of a rotation program that would broaden the individual's perspective. As noted in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) report (DoD, 2006b, p. vii), DoD is shifting emphasis "from separate military Service concepts of operation—to joint and combined operations" and "from Department of Defense solutions—to interagency approaches." As mentioned earlier, several key senior career civilian executive positions probably exist for which prior multiservice and/or interagency experiences would be extremely beneficial. Thus, it seems appropriate to plan for and include in the senior civilian leadership cadre

some people who have being purposely equipped through multiservice or interagency assignments.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, we have discussed the broad competencies SES members need for successful job performance in joint matters. Not surprisingly, most competencies associated with success in joint or nonjoint matters are the same. When drawing distinctions between joint and nonjoint SES positions, the interviewees normally referred to the complexity and additional dimensions associated with joint activities—the latter requiring both joint knowledge and the ability to adopt a joint perspective.

We also offered recommendations and discussed initiatives that could enhance SES performance in joint matters. However, the interviewees pointed out that the initiatives should not be limited to preparation for positions in joint matters but focused on enhancing performance across the Department's SES corps. The recommendations relate to SES management, selections and assignments, and education and training. The chapter concluded by linking the recommendations to ongoing or proposed initiatives.



## Enhancing Reserve Component and General and Flag Officers' Performance in Joint Matters

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The roles of the guard and the reserve are evolving from a “strategic reserve” to an “operational reserve.” Under the former, the reserve components were to be used primarily in the later stages of a conflict after receiving additional personnel, equipment, and training. Little emphasis was placed on routinely developing guard and reserve officers for joint assignments. Conversely, the post–cold war use of these forces has profoundly altered concepts about the nature and purpose of the reserve components. Since 2001, more than 580,000 guardsmen and reservists have been called up. As operations in Iraq and Afghanistan illustrate, they are participating in military operations that are more joint than ever before.

Heavy reliance on reserve component forces is not restricted to Central Command (CENTCOM). The European Command (EUCOM) is a classic example. Everyday an average of 4,500 guard and reserve troops serve in EUCOM’s region, performing such missions as command and control, airlift, airborne tankers, engineering, force protection, special operations, and intelligence (see Jones, 2006). Indeed, members of the reserve components make up more than 10 percent of the uniformed personnel in the EUCOM headquarters. As reserve component roles continue to evolve, a crucial question OSD and the services must address is how best to develop RC G/FOs for joint matters. In this chapter, which is based on senior leader interviews and data analysis, we outline answers to that question by discussing RC G/FO performance in joint matters, along with recommendations and initiatives to enhance that performance.

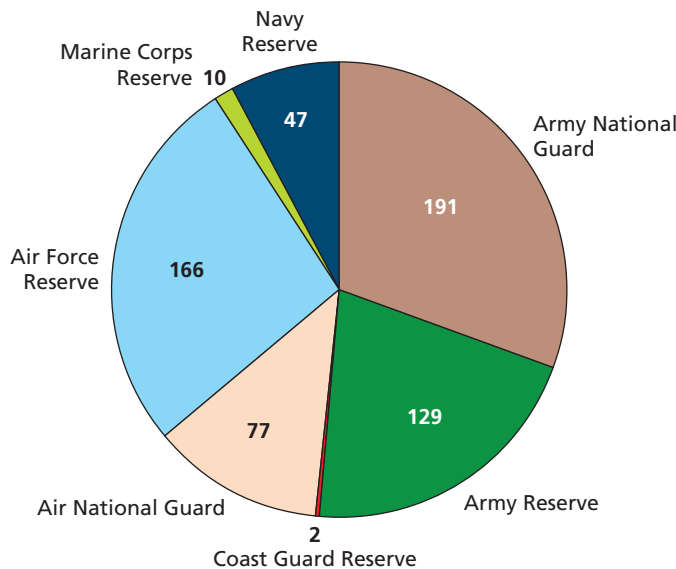
This chapter starts with a description of the RC G/FO population in the aggregate and, more specifically, in joint organizations. It is followed by a discussion of the RC G/FO competencies needed for success in joint matters. Next, we discuss the requisite experiences and education that might aid the acquisition of joint competencies. The chapter closes with a discussion of systemic obstacles and impediments prior to presenting the recommendations.

## Reserve Component General and Flag Officer Population

RC G/FOs comprise a substantial portion of our nation's military leadership. As Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show, there are 622 G/FOs in the various reserve components and 894 active-duty G/FOs. Of the 1,516 flag-rank officers, 298 are serving in joint organizations,<sup>1</sup> and about one in five of these are being filled by RC G/FOs—see Figure 4.3. The joint billets filled by RC G/FOs are normally part-time positions that require extensive time commitments.

Approximately 60 of the 298 joint billets are specifically designated for the reserve component. They include the 54 nominative positions (Chairman's Ten,<sup>2</sup> 41 individual mobilization augmentees [IMA], and three others), five service-specific IMA positions, and one rotational IMA position. Also, RC members are occasionally selected to serve in other JDAL positions.

**Figure 4.1**  
**Reserve Component General and Flag Officers**



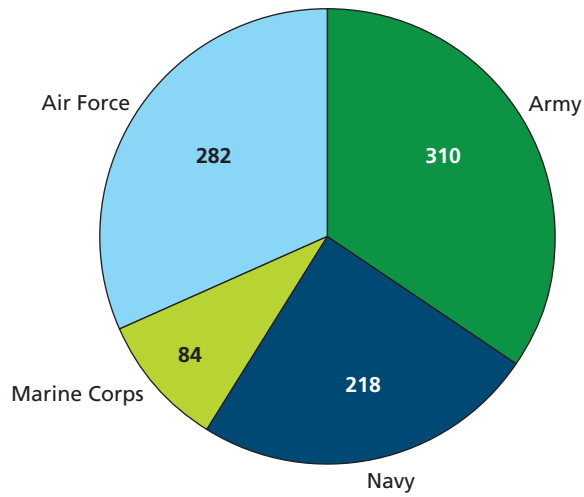
SOURCE: DMDC Database, as of July 2006.

RAND MG621-4.1

<sup>1</sup> We labeled "joint" those organizations that have billets on the JDAL.

<sup>2</sup> The so-called Chairman's Ten (ten full-time guard and reserve positions at the Commander-in-Chief's headquarters) has been increased to fifteen as of January 2008.

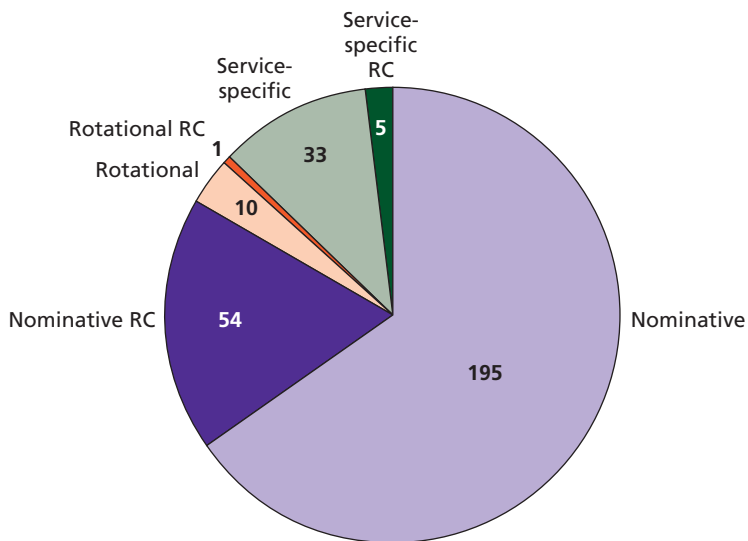
**Figure 4.2**  
**Active Component General and Flag Officers**



SOURCE: DMDC Database, as of July 2006.

RAND MG621-4.2

**Figure 4.3**  
**General and Flag Officer Billets in Joint Organizations**



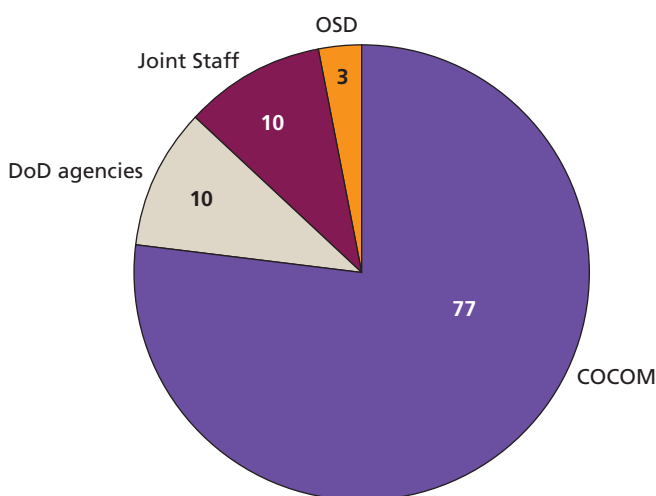
SOURCE: Joint General/Flag Officers Matters Data Extract.

RAND MG621-4.3

As shown in Figure 4.4, three out of four RC G/FOs serving in joint assignments are serving in combatant commands; the rest are distributed over DoD agencies, the Joint Staff, and OSD. They serve in a variety of capacities. Some serve in full-time positions, e.g. the Chairman's Ten. Many volunteer to serve in full-time positions, but existing regulations require them to leave the assignment for a short period of time after having held the position for 180 days. Still others serve in IMA assignments, holding those assignments for an extended period that is much greater than the minimum two weeks per year required of such assignments. Because they serve for extended periods, the IMAs play a vital role in their organizations, and they are often the first to be mobilized.

Even with the above numbers, most RC G/FOs experience jointness without being assigned to joint organizations. As operations in Iraq, Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia have demonstrated, RC G/FOs, operating at levels below unified combatant command headquarters, are tapped to command multiservice and multinational forces. Domestically, as evinced by security and recovery operations following the September 11th terrorist attacks and natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, RC G/FOs may be picked to lead joint task forces to assist in emergency management. As another example, many National Guard general officers are currently charged with the responsibility of transforming their state headquarters into viable joint, or combined, headquarters. Thus, focusing only on RC G/FOs filling billets in joint organizations would miss a large and important part of the force that is engaged in joint operations.

**Figure 4.4**  
**Percentage Distribution of RC General/Flag Officers in**  
**Joint Organizations**



SOURCE: Joint General/Flag Officers Matters Data Extract.

RAND MG621-4.4

## Competencies Needed for Success in Joint Matters

In this section, we explore what competencies RC G/FOs will need to be successful in modern joint operations. The findings presented here emerge directly from the interviews and focus group sessions.

### Reserve Component G/FOs Serving in Joint Billets Require the Same Competencies as Their Active-Duty Counterparts

RC G/FOs need the same competencies as their active-duty counterparts when serving in joint billets. Those competencies include domain knowledge (functional and operational areas), an enterprise perspective, and leadership and management skills. The interviewees consistently stressed the importance of the latter two competencies. Although all the leadership and management skills are important, the existing environment may place greater emphasis on such skill subsets as leading change, prioritizing tasks and time, analytical thinking, influencing, and negotiating. In selected functional areas, such as logistics, intelligence and command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR), they cited the importance of domain knowledge. For example, critical domain competencies cited for Director of Intelligence billets include deep expertise in strategic intelligence and operational intelligence.

To paraphrase the interviewees: The requirements for the specific job determine the needed competencies, not whether the job is being given to an AC or RC G/FO. And, especially in war zones, senior AC interviewees indicated that they made no distinction between AC and RC G/FOs—which G/FO gets the job depends entirely on the competencies that he or she possesses.

### Most Competencies for Successful Performance in the Joint Arena Are Similar to Those for Nonjoint Positions

G/FO jobs in the joint environment, like their counterparts in a service environment, are principally leadership positions. G/FOs, like other members of DoD's executive leadership team, must be able to communicate, motivate, plan, implement and identify and constructively utilize the unique capabilities of their subordinates.<sup>3</sup> This suggests that much of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that characterize effective leadership in the joint arena is comparable to that in nonjoint positions—whether they are within the services or another component of the executive leadership team. All interviewees emphasized the value of personal characteristics, leadership, and management skills for successful performance in joint matters.

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<sup>3</sup> Other components of the DoD executive leadership team include political appointees and career and noncareer SES members.

The interviewees ascribed the following major attributes to “great” G/FOs in joint matters. The uniquely joint attributes are shown in italics:<sup>4</sup>

- strong leadership and management skills
- positive outlook/people-orientation
- broad perspective rooted in breadth of experiences based on diversity of assignments
- *appreciation for the capabilities of sister services*
- *deep understanding of joint doctrine, tactics, operations, and strategic issues*
- *knowledge of joint operations gained via field-grade unified combatant command experience/exposure*
- deep domain knowledge (for specific domains, e.g., logistics, intelligence, C4ISR).

### **General and Flag Officers Serving in Joint Billets Also Need Uniquely Joint Competencies**

Our interviews confirmed the significance of joint-specific competencies. The importance of such characteristics as flexibility and receptiveness to new ways of operating, and familiarity with current concepts, tactics, and strategies fundamental to joint operations, emerged as dominant themes. The interviewees’ description of joint attributes compares favorably with the joint warfighter subcompetencies defined in Morath’s Joint Leader Competency Model (Morath et al., 2006, p. 20). This framework includes three joint warfighter subcompetencies: optimizing joint capability, applying operational and strategic art, and joint perspective.<sup>5</sup> We present each subcompetency definition in italics and then discuss how the subcompetency relates to the major attributes that interviewees ascribed to great G/FOs in joint matters.

**Optimizing Joint Capability.** Definition: “The officer considers and applies capabilities of each service, agency, and entity in a manner that optimizes joint capability, interoperability, and interdependence. This may include evolutionary and revolutionary application of capabilities to support the success of integrated operations across a range of missions.”

The definition’s main thrust is addressed in large part by interviewee comments related to the need for RC G/FOs to understand and appreciate the capabilities of their sister services and to understand joint doctrine, tactics, operations, and strategy.

**Applying Operational and Strategic Art.** Definition: “The officer understands and applies the operational and strategic art of joint warfare and peacekeeping, demon-

<sup>4</sup> These attributes are not all joint attributes; rather, they are attributes that the senior leader interviewees said were required of great G/FOs in joint matters.

<sup>5</sup> The Joint Leader Competency Model also addresses a broad range of leadership, management, and communication skills, as well as the need to think strategically and to be committed to lifelong learning.

strates expertise in interacting and leveraging service and joint doctrine, concepts, and capabilities, within an effects-based approach to joint warfare, demonstrates a broad understanding of battle command systems and their interrelationships.”

As with optimizing joint capability, the issues addressed in this definition relate to interviewee comments about sister service appreciation and the understanding of joint doctrine, operations, and strategy. Additionally, comments concerning the need for field-grade unified command and joint staff experience or exposure also address this definition's characteristics.

**Joint Perspective.** Definition: “The officer maximizes joint capabilities by maintaining an understanding and awareness of service-centric biases and tendencies (in self and others) that may affect mission success, and applies wisdom in eliminating negative biases and tendencies, such as careerism and service parochialism, at the individual and organizational levels.”

Interviewee comments address this characteristic fully in their call for RC G/FOs to appreciate the capabilities of their sister services. The joint arena is no place for service parochialism. RC G/FOs must, in the words of one interviewee, “lose their service loyalties and adopt a joint outlook.” Another noted that, “There is no place in my (joint) organization for officers who place the needs of their service before the organization's needs, at both the field-grade and G/FO levels.”

In discussing the above attributes, the interviewees regularly referred to the need for RC G/FOs to have had prior joint experience at the staff and unified combatant command levels.

### **RC Civilian Skills May Also Contribute to Success in Joint Matters**

Particularly at the field-grade level, RC officers deployed to a theater bring important civilian skills to their theater assignments. Two examples stand out. One RC field-grade officer with extensive electrical power-grid experience was able to put this experience to good use in-theater to help rebuild the power distribution infrastructure. Another officer with extensive railroad operations experience helped reconstitute and organize the in-theater civilian rail network.

At the G/FO level, civilian domain knowledge is not as important because of the leadership/management nature of RC G/FO assignments. However, given that RC G/FOs are likely to have attained civilian management and leadership positions that show their ability to motivate and work closely with civilian subordinates and peers, these skills are valuable when working with in-theater civilian organizations.

Finally, RC G/FOs are likely to be leaders in their local civilian communities. They can and have served the dual role of (1) understanding how defense issues are “playing in Peoria” and (2) helping couch the issues in terms that help them to be “understood in Peoria.”

## Requisite Experiences and Education

All interviewees had specific observations concerning the types of assignments and education that RC officers need during their mid-careers and at the point at which they are selected to O-7. Stated succinctly, for effective performance in their G/FO joint assignments, it is important for these RC officers to have had prior active-duty staff, joint staff, and combatant command experience. Also, it is important for them to have had in-residence JPME Phase II courses. Their observations are explained in greater detail below.

### Current Field-Grade Assignments/Education Do Not Adequately Prepare RC Officers for Joint G/FO Responsibilities<sup>6</sup>

While all interviewees indicated that RC G/FOs are outstanding officers, they stressed that traditional RC field-grade assignments and military education venues do not adequately prepare the officers for joint G/FO responsibilities.<sup>7</sup> In many cases, the RC officer's first active-duty assignment in the joint arena is as a G/FO. While many RC G/FOs have extensive domain knowledge, their lack of field-grade joint experience and JPME results in a steep learning curve. Because many RC G/FOs do not have joint staff experience as a field-grade officer, they can find themselves placed in joint staff positions without a full grasp of joint languages and processes.

### What RC G/FOs Need Before Being Promoted to G/FO

The interviewees specified the following experiences for field-grade RC officers who have the potential to become RC G/FOs:

- joint exposure at O-4/O-5, not as liaisons with states but on joint staffs (“They need to learn how to do staff work before they can successfully run staffs.”)
- unified combatant command active-duty experience
- command assignments
- A diversity of assignments to broaden perspective, including, for the National Guard, assignments outside their units
- war college (some interviewees thought correspondence or blended learning venues would suffice)
- in-residence joint PME, where students include both AC and RC

<sup>6</sup> At the time of this research, Congress did not require joint experience or joint education as a prerequisite for promotion to general and flag ranks in the reserve components. Nevertheless, the interviewees believed these experiences are critical for senior leaders in joint matters.

<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting that AC interviewees frequently underscored the high quality of the RC G/FOs, noting that they are intelligent, highly motivated, and good leaders. These interviewees stressed the need for better joint preparation before promotion to RC G/FO.

- assignments and education/training opportunities to develop relationships with and trust of AC counterparts.

**Field-Grade Developmental Assignments.** RC field-grade officers who have the potential to become G/FOs need several kinds of active-duty assignment: staff and joint staff assignments, unified command assignments, and command assignments. It is also important for these officers to have a diversity of assignments, i.e., assignments outside their units, to develop a broader perspective than can be obtained from intra-unit assignments. Especially for National Guard officers, it is important that these assignments *not* be as liaisons with their states because liaison assignments do not provide sufficient experience.

**PME and JPME.** War college attendance is useful for the joint perspective it provides. Some interviewees, recognizing that in-residence attendance for the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) or the war colleges requires a ten-month time investment, suggested that alternative methods would be acceptable. In-residence attendance at the ten-week Joint and Combined Warfighting School (JCWS) at the Joint Forces Staff College, with its high number of AC officers in attendance, was suggested as the preferred method for RC members.

In-residence AC-RC integrated JPME is highly desirable for RC officers who are potential future G/FOs. As one interviewee put it, the real learning takes place during seminars where participants interact, ideas surface, service-specific perspectives are aired, and the discussion itself causes participants to think more deeply about issues in general. Correspondence attendance at these schools simply does not provide this type of learning. RC participants in these programs can gain a real understanding of the problems and challenges faced by their AC counterparts. Their AC counterparts can also gain an appreciation of the challenges faced by the RC. The in-residence venue allows the AC and RC officers, some of whom will be G/FOs themselves one day, to get to know each other and build relationships and trust that will foster better, more effective working relationships when they serve together in the future.

### **What Is Needed upon Promotion to RC General or Flag Officer**

Two activities were suggested for all RC G/FOs at the time of their selection to O-7. First, all selectees should attend CAPSTONE. CAPSTONE attendance was deemed mandatory because (1) it focuses on joint issues, and RC officers would gain valuable knowledge from these activities and (2) since all active component (AC) O-7s must attend CAPSTONE, RC attendance would also provide the opportunity for relationship-building that would foster better working relationships when the RC G/FOs later are assigned to, or are working with, their AC counterparts. Second, if specific selectees have not had a joint assignment and cannot attend CAPSTONE, there should be a one to two week short course that addresses joint issues in detail.

## Systemic Obstacles and Impediments

Collectively, our senior leaders' assessments indicate that field-grade exposure to joint activities is a necessary condition for effective performance in joint matters. Accordingly, we asked if they had observed or experienced any systemic factors that, in their judgment, impeded the acquisition of this exposure prior to their RC subordinates being assigned to a joint G/FO position. Responses invariably included concern that RC G/FOs are often not well educated in joint matters and have limited access to joint training opportunities. They also noted the lack of adequate measuring and tracking mechanisms for joint experiences. Specific points highlighted as obstacles include

- insufficient JPME slots for integrated AC-RC in-residence courses for potential RC G/FOs
- inadequately integrated AC and RC training
- lack of a personnel management system to track RC officer assignments, education, and joint experience
- state boundary constraints on Guard assignments
- AC “distrust” of the RC.<sup>8</sup>

We discuss each point below.

### **Lack of Sufficient In-Residence AC/RC-Integrated JPME Slots for Potential RC G/FOs**

Interviewee comments focused primarily on Phase II JPME. Table 4.1 lists JPME venues, along with the annual numbers of student seats.

All these schools award Phase II JPME credit and, excluding JCWS, are ten-month in-residence programs. The JCWS is a ten-week in-residence program. For RC officers, committing to ten months can pose significant problems, and the ten-week JCWS course provides a more attractive opportunity.<sup>9</sup> Annual graduation rates for the JCWS from January 2001 through April 2006 show that the school graduates about 800 U.S. military students per year.<sup>10</sup> Less than 2 percent of these graduates come from the RC.

As we noted earlier, integrated AC/RC in-residence JPME provides an important, relationship- and trust-building vehicle for both AC and RC attendees. It also improves AC and RC attendees' appreciation of their counterparts' perspectives and challenges.

<sup>8</sup> “Distrust” is in quotes because it stems primarily from the AC leadership's lack of awareness of what is included in RC training.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that advanced joint professional military education (AJPME) is the primary source of senior-level joint PME for the RC. AJPME is not a combined RC-AC course; therefore, it is not included in this discussion.

<sup>10</sup> The additional 40 come from civilians and foreign military services.

**Table 4.1**  
**Phase II JPME Venues**

Venue	Annual Seats
National War College	124
Air War College	184
Army War College	227
Marine Corps War College	13
Naval War College	312
Industrial College of the Armed Forces	180
Joint Advanced Warfighting School	28
Joint and Combined Warfighting School	840
Total	1,908

NOTE: The Process for Accreditation of Joint Education (PAJE) must accredit the service war colleges in order for students to get Phase II JPME credit.

**Inadequately Integrated AC and RC Training**

Several interviewees noted the importance of RC units training alongside their AC counterparts, during both the actual joint training exercises and the pre- and post-exercise activities.<sup>11</sup> To paraphrase one interviewee, most of the real training doesn't happen during the exercise but during the pre- and postexercise activities. Unfortunately, the RC units participating in these exercises may show up the day before the exercise begins and leave the day after it ends. This deprives them of the learning that takes place during the pre- and postexercise activities. At the very least, RC unit leaders should participate in those activities, and it would be even better to have the entire RC unit participate.

As units prepare for deployment, the RC unit leader(s) should participate in the AC unit's predeployment workup activities when possible. This participation has two important benefits. First, it gives the RC unit leader(s) insight into the AC unit's challenges. Second, it gives both AC and RC unit leader(s) a chance to get to know each other and get a feel for unit strengths and weaknesses before they find themselves in the deployment theater.

**Lack of an RC Personnel Management System**

There is no RC personnel management system today that tracks RC assignments, training, and education with sufficient depth to reflect an RC officer's level of joint competency. This is a serious obstacle to finding officers with the right skills to fill joint assignments. Indeed, while Title 10 requires AC officers to have specific joint education and experience for promotion purposes, no such requirement exists for the RC com-

<sup>11</sup> These units can include all pay grades and not just G/FOs.

munity. As discussed earlier in this chapter, previous research indicates that joint exposure can come from non-JDAL assignments. Further, RC experiences with planning and preparation for national emergencies and disaster relief, where extensive interaction with federal, state, and local agencies is required, reflect a degree of “jointness” not usually found in AC assignments. The RC personnel management system should be able to capture all of these experiences and permit specification of the level and nature of the RC officer’s joint exposure. The current JDAL-based YES/NO tracking system for AC officers is not sufficient to reflect RC joint experience and satisfy RC needs.

### **State Boundary Constraints**

For the National Guard, state boundary constraints may pose a problem for providing potential future G/FOs with the diversity of assignments that interviewees recommend. While there are no legislative constraints that require intra-unit and intrastate assignments, several interviewees noted that tradition has developed as a constraint. It is important for state civilian and National Guard leaders to recognize the need for assignment diversity to provide future Guard G/FOs with a broader enterprise perspective.

### **Active Component “Distrust”**

AC interviewees noted that RC G/FOs are high-quality officers, but the interviewees had two concerns. First, AC commanders often do not know their RC G/FOs, i.e., they had not worked with them or otherwise rubbed shoulders with them in prior assignments or education venues. Second, they were concerned about the possible absence of transparency and consistency in RC-exclusive training, not about the sufficiency of that training. AC commanders understand the content of AC training, and they have pretty good insight into the capabilities of subordinates who go through AC training venues. But because AC commanders are unfamiliar with the content of RC-exclusive training, they do not have the same appreciation for those training venues. Hence, they are not always sure about their RC subordinates’ capabilities.

Any action that gives AC leaders a greater appreciation of RC G/FO capabilities should improve this situation. Integrated AC-RC joint training exercises, including pre- and postexercise activities and opportunities for integrated AC-RC PME/JPME, should help increase this appreciation.

## **Recommendations for Enhancing General and Flag Officers’ Performance in Joint Matters**

Given their assessments of RC G/FO performance in joint matters, the interviewees offered myriad recommendations to enhance the training and operational experiences that cultivate competencies correlated with effective G/FO performance in the joint

arena. We have grouped the recommendations into three categories: joint education and training, joint assignments, and overall RC joint career management.

### Joint Education and Training

Given that most reserve component members have full-time civilian jobs, few are able to attend the longer in-residence JPME programs. The interviewees recognized the challenges this poses for RC members. Nevertheless, they still stressed the importance of attending the in-residence JPME II programs. Here are their specific recommendations.

*Increase RC in-residence JPME II attendance.* Most interviewees suggested reviewing the basis for the existing number of JPME II seats and, if possible, increasing the number of seats to allow more RC members to attend. Several suggested targeting more seats for RC members at the JCWS because of the shorter course length and the fact that many of the classes reportedly have unfilled seats. (See GAO, 2002, pp. 8–9). According to one knowledgeable interviewee, RC members could fill many of these empty seats if they were notified in sufficient time to make the necessary family and employer arrangements.

*Continue AJPME and encourage attendance.* During the late 1990s, the lack of access to JPME opportunities for RC field-grade officers drew congressional attention. Citing inadequate preparation of RC members for joint duty, the House National Security Committee directed development of educational opportunities similar in content to the resident programs of the Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) for active-duty officers.<sup>12</sup> The RC JPME program was developed as a means to provide the RC officer with the means to achieve the JPME requirements outlined in the law (10 U.S. Code, 2006, and DoD, 2002).

Like its in-residence counterparts, the AJPME curriculum is designed to give students an opportunity to experience the plans and operational challenges that they should anticipate over a three-year joint duty assignment. It is similar in content, but not identical to, the in-residence JCWS JPME II course. The AJPME course consists of a 40-week program of blended learning—mostly distance learning (DL) with two periods of face-to-face education. It is sequenced in the following manner: 10 weeks DL + 1 week in-residence + 27 weeks DL + 2 weeks in residence.

For most RC members, PME opportunities need to be presented in a format that can be accomplished during two-week active-duty tours and/or weekend drills. Thus, a nonresident course like AJPME, which combines distance learning, electronic

<sup>12</sup> Congress included the following language in the FY 1999 Defense Authorization Act:

In order to prepare reserve component field grade officers for joint duty assignments, the committee directs that a course similar in content to, but not identical to, the in-residence Armed Forces Staff College course for field grade active component officers be developed as soon as possible periods of in residence training, as well as distance learning, present the best combination of academic rigor, cohort development, and cross-service acculturation.

collaboration, and periodic face-to-face interaction in a group setting, seems acceptable to approximate the joint acculturation and competency that resident programs achieve. However, distance learning and electronic collaboration without a strong in-residence component would not be acceptable to the interviewees. The nonresident course must continue to include a strong in-residence component to bring students together. Invaluable learning takes place in the seminars, where students from the different services contribute their services' perspectives to the issues being discussed, and the discussion itself also generates valuable ideas and insights that a correspondence setting simply does not provide.

*Seek additional opportunities for RC G/FOs to attend CAPSTONE.* 10 U.S.C. Chapter 38, sec. 2153, reads as follows:

Each officer selected for promotion to the grade of brigadier general or, in the case of the Navy, rear admiral (lower half) shall be required, after such selection, to attend a military education course designed specifically to prepare new G/FOs to work with the other armed forces.

Beginning in 1987, the frequency of CAPSTONE courses was changed from two to four per year to satisfy the statutory requirement of the DoD Reorganization Act of 1986—that all newly selected AC G/FOs attend the CAPSTONE course. The course's mission is to ensure that newly selected G/FOs understand the fundamentals of joint doctrine and the joint operational art; know how to integrate the elements of national power in order to accomplish national security and national military strategies; and understand how joint, interagency, and multinational operations support national strategic goals and objectives. Its focus is on the highest levels of strategy, integrating the elements of national power to achieve national security objectives. In particular, the CAPSTONE course reinforces new G/FO comprehension of joint matters and national security strategy needed for the remainder of the officer's career.

Each CAPSTONE class has the capacity for 42 seats; the students are called CAPSTONE Fellows. The services, U.S. government agencies, and the RC have designated quotas for the classes, which convene four times each year. The RC has 16 designated seats per year. In the mid-1990s, the decision was made to allocate one seat per CAPSTONE class for new RC G/FOs, with a view toward allocating additional seats in future years. Since 2004, four seats per class have been designated for RC G/FOs. Among the interviewees, there was general consensus that if Total Force jointness and seamless integration is to take root, most RC officers, upon promotion to O-7, should attend CAPSTONE just as their active-duty counterparts do. In addition to providing an up-to-date perspective on joint issues, CAPSTONE fosters relationships and helps build trust. Increasing RC attendance will require exploring ways to ensure that RC slots are filled and possibly exploring mechanisms to increase throughput.

*Increase opportunities for RC and AC integrated JPME.* Distance and collaborative learning technologies should be exploited to develop common hybrid JPME II

learning opportunities for both AC and RC officers. For example, if hybrid delivery of ten-week JCWS JPME II resulted in eight weeks of resident and two weeks of non-resident instruction, its annual throughput of graduates could increase from 840 to 1,150. More RC members should be able to attend the shortened in-resident portion, which would result in a larger proportion of both AC and RC students being exposed to the same curriculum, planning tools, and equipment. Increasing the throughput would require changes to existing legislation, in addition to support from the services.

Two important benefits could arise from the integrated AC/RC JPME. First, AC attendees would gain insights into the challenges faced by the RC and vice versa. Secondly, it should foster the building of relationships and trust between AC and RC officers.

*Increase participation in joint training exercises.* One way to increase joint war-fighting capability is through joint training exercises. Indeed, the *Joint Training Vision* (JCS, 2006, p. A-1) states that “Everyone required to conduct military operations will be trained, under realistic conditions and to exacting standards, prior to execution of those operations. Personnel selected for joint assignments will be trained prior to reaching their duty location.” Joint training exercises include training (including mission rehearsals) of individuals, units, and staffs using joint doctrine to prepare joint forces or staffs to respond to strategic, operational, or tactical requirements of the combatant commanders to execute their assigned or anticipated missions. Such training involves AC and/or RC forces of two or more military services interacting with a joint staff or individuals preparing to serve on a joint staff or in a joint organization and is conducted using joint doctrine.

### Joint Assignments

An important aspect of senior leader development is placing the promising leaders in positions that expose them to numerous challenging and educational experiences before they assume more critical operational and strategic leadership positions. The importance of joint developmental assignments is reflected in U.S. Code, Title 10, which requires that active-duty officers either complete a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment or receive a waiver prior to being selected for promotion to the G/FO ranks.<sup>13</sup> Our interviewees noted that RC members frequently do not have joint assignments prior to being promoted to general and flag ranks. They thus face a very steep learning curve that often requires senior AC G/FO mentoring. While these officers are high-quality officers, they simply have not had the appropriate field-grade development assignments to gain joint enterprise knowledge. The following specific recommendations emerged from our interviews.

*Joint experience prior to promotion to G/FO rank is a must.* For G/FOs who may eventually serve in joint positions, prior joint experience is critical. Paraphrasing one

<sup>13</sup> See 10 U.S.C. sec. 619a (b) for more discussion of the requirements and possible waivers.

interviewee, it is difficult to be effective at the senior levels in a joint organization if you haven't previously been part of one. Several interviewees were more specific—suggesting that a combatant command assignment as a field-grade officer was ideal. While each combatant command has its own institutional setting (e.g., language, policies, and procedures), all provide valuable exposure to sister services and to the challenges combatant commands face when preparing to operate in a combat environment. As another indication of the importance of joint experiences, the FY 2000 NDAA includes the following language related to the selection of an officer for a service's reserve component chief:

... the officer is determined by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in accordance with criteria and as a result of a process established by the Chairman, to have significant joint duty experience . . . (Sec. 554).

*Encourage diversity of assignments.* Field-grade officers who have the potential to become RC G/FOs and serve in joint matters should have assignments that take them outside their original units and outside their original states. This applies specifically to Guard members. While there is no federal policy that precludes such assignments, interviewees perceived a strong tendency to keep such officers within their states.

The military, as well as the private sector, uses progression through various jobs as an aspect of leader development (see Robbert et al., 2005; Harrell et al., 2004; and McCall, 1998). Purposeful progression through various jobs provides a breadth of exposure to the entire operation, i.e., enterprise knowledge. A certain amount of adaptability, agility, and flexibility accrues when people experience mobility: becoming a key part of different units and operating in different locations. Senior leaders in joint matters need all these qualities. If a person remained essentially in one unit and one state throughout a career, he or she would miss important developmental experiences.

### **Overall RC Joint Career Management**

A common theme among most interviewees was that, unlike with the active component, there is no system for managing RC joint experience, education, and development, even though RC members occupy an increasing number of billets in joint organizations and are being called upon more frequently to support joint operations. Several interviewees were aware of the DoD instruction on RC joint officer management (DoD, 2002) but questioned whether it was being implemented.<sup>14</sup> Some wondered if it was even implementable. Their recommendations follow.

*Implement an effective RC joint officer management system.* It became clear during the interview process that existing mechanisms for tracking RC officers' joint experiences are inadequate to nonexistent. A system is needed that at the very least tracks

<sup>14</sup> This document prescribes procedures for RC joint officer management, including joint officer learning.

and records RC officers' experiences in joint matters. The current DoD instruction relies heavily on the Joint Duty Assignment–Reserve (JDA-R) to establish a construct similar to the use of the JDAL for the active component. The interviewees, doubting the JDA-R exists, suggested it would not be inclusive enough. They recommended developing metrics for “joint”—regardless of component—that would allow for RC-equivalent credits. Many would prefer the proposal being considered for the AC, which would distinguish between levels of joint qualifications rather than use the Joint Specialty Officer (JSO) nomenclature. Given the nature of service by most RC members, these metrics should allow for credits to be accumulated over an extended period and in a variety of assignments and education and training settings.

*Determine the demand for RC joint experience and the supply to satisfy that demand.* There is a need for more RC joint experience, training, and education. But we heard expressions of concern that DoD does not know the answers to some key questions: how much, what type, for whom, and when? Answers to these questions are important for several reasons, including RC joint officer development, JPME seating planning and allocation, and overall career force management.

*Identify and develop high-potential RC field-grade officers.* There is considerable ambiguity within the force as to how high-potential RC members are identified and developed. If the guidelines and procedures were better understood, it would help commanders and supervisors mentor their high-potential subordinates. Collectively, this would help ensure that high-potential RC field-grade officers get the appropriate assignments, education, and training to prepare them for more-senior billets in joint matters.

The consensus was that the process should include two elements among others: (1) self-selection by those RC field-grade officers who aspire to senior ranks and (2) commitment on the part of senior leadership to provide those officers with appropriate development opportunities. The self-selection process is important because high potential is demonstrated by both high quality and high commitment. One without the other is insufficient. Senior leadership commitment includes identifying people with high potential; mentoring them; and making them available for appropriate joint experiences, training, and education.

*Make more effective use of the joint reserve units (JRU) or their equivalent.* The approaches for integrating RC members into unified combat command headquarters vary, but several interviewees recommended greater and more effective use of the JRU concept. In theory, members of the JRU work side-by-side with their active counterparts. For example, the United States Joint Forces Command's (USJFCOM's) JRU is composed of reserve members from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, and members of the Army and Air National Guard. They augment and extend USJFCOM's capabilities in transformation, experimentation, joint training, interoperability, and force provision. Likewise, the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) relies heavily on mid-grade RC officers and senior non-

commissioned officers (NCOs) from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard in its Joint Transportation Reserve Unit (JTRU). Another example is the Joint European Reserve Unit (JERU), which consolidates the reserve strength of Headquarters, United States European Command, to provide the right reservist at the right time.

The JRU concept has been evolving since 1991. JRUs could be leveraged to make more effective use of RC members and thus become important elements in RC joint officer development.

*Develop a system to catalog and track RC officers' civilian competencies.* Many RC members have a wealth of civilian experience that is relatable to, and needed in, joint matters. Many have civilian jobs that equip them with skills in working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), working with non-DoD agencies (i.e., commerce, banking), interagency negotiations, and so on. Although the viability and transferability of civilian skills may vary, a formal mechanism would be beneficial for documenting those skills that might be useful in joint matters. Many interviewees noted how lucky they had been in-theater to have RC field-grade officers with useful civilian skills. However, they would rather have a formal mechanism to reduce their dependence on luck.

In summary, three major themes reverberate throughout the recommendations. First, future RC G/FOs must have opportunities during their field-grade careers to gain joint experience. Second, they must have opportunities during their field-grade careers to build strong working relationships with their AC counterparts. Third, because traditional RC career paths do not readily accommodate development of the requisite joint experience needed by future G/FOs, formal mechanisms are required to identify high-potential officers to ensure that they are afforded appropriate assignments, education,<sup>15</sup> and training opportunities. Implementing the recommendations discussed in this section has the potential to add depth, breadth, and structure to the current RC joint officer development process.

## **Initiatives to Enhance Performance of Reserve Component Officers in Joint Matters**

Several DoD documents indicate that the Department is taking actions that will fundamentally change its approach for preparing active and reserve component officers for joint matters. Among these actions are initiatives that address some, but not all, aspects of our report's recommendations. In this section, we link DoD's current initiatives to

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<sup>15</sup> Both intermediate- and senior-level professional military education are accessible to RC members via distance learning techniques. This recommendation concerns in-residence education with AC members.

our recommendations and follow with a discussion of potentially new initiatives that would also address some of the recommendations.

### **Current Initiatives**

The Department has launched four recent initiatives that are compatible with many of the interviewees' recommendations.

**Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management (JOM) and Joint Professional Military Education** (DoD, 2006a). This strategic plan focuses on the personnel life cycle, with particular emphasis on the development of joint qualified officers. The plan takes a Total Force perspective seeking to implement similar policies for both the active and reserve components while recognizing their inherent differences. Accordingly, DoD is planning to implement a JOM program for RC members allowing officers

to achieve joint qualification through different combinations and sequencing of education and experience. For example, recent, intense (content of experience) or frequent (number of times) experience might count for basic joint qualification as might short experiences buttressed by education. Points could be assigned for months or years of specified experience or education/training (DoD 2006a, p. 15).

To help implement this plan, DoD added data elements to the Reserve Component Common Personnel Data System (RCCPDS) to capture joint assignments, training, and education for RC officers. The added data elements will provide a ready means of identifying an RC officer's level of joint competency and joint qualifications.

This initiative is consistent with three of this report's recommendations: (1) The strategic plan with the changes to the RCCPDS should provide imperative elements for implementing an effective RC joint officer management system. (2) Adopting similar policies for both AC and RC should encourage joint experience prior to promotion to RC G/FO ranks. (3) Likewise, adopting similar policies for both components should also encourage diversity of assignments.

**Strategic Plan for Transforming DoD Training** (DoD, 2006d). The objective of this plan is to improve joint training and education for the Total Force: active component, reserve component, DoD civilians, and contractors. The Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), in collaboration with the secretaries of the Military Departments, the CJCS, the combatant commanders of U.S. Forces Command and Special Operations Command, and the Under Secretaries of Defense, is tasked to revise DoD's strategy to advance the transformation of training and education of the Total Force to

- accommodate new missions and warfighting concepts
- fill joint training gaps and seams

- build partner capacity
- achieve greater joint effectiveness and efficiency.

The transformation consists of three pillars: Joint National Training Capability (JNTC), Joint Knowledge Development and Distribution Capability (JKDDC), and Joint Assessment and Enabling Capability (JAEC). The intent of JNTC is to make existing service exercises more joint. The intended purpose of JKDDC is to be a library of training courses available through a global network that can be taken “just-in-time” or when a joint warfighter is assigned to a unit in which the training is required. The JAEC is expected to be a tracking and assessment tool to achieve transparency between training and operations and help make the force more adaptable. DoD expects to invest almost \$2 billion in the training transformation program between FYs 2006 and 2011.

The training transformation program should help enhance the performance of RC members in joint matters. For example, the plan calls for reaccreditation standards and criteria that will ensure a recurring, consistent, and realistic joint training environment for all units participating in future rotations of accredited joint training programs. As another example, RC members should benefit when they participate in service- and combatant command-sponsored combat training programs enhanced by the JNTC initiative, especially during predeployment and mission rehearsal exercises.<sup>16</sup> As yet another example, the transformation includes plans to expand the JNTC accreditation process to include National Guard training programs.

These aspects of the training transformation plan match well with this report’s recommendation to increase RC participation in joint training exercises. The plan, in Section 1.4, acknowledges the unique training and skill-sustainment challenges faced by RC members while calling for new opportunities for enhanced RC joint training. Indeed, the reserve components are included as collaborative agencies on many of the plan’s action items.<sup>17</sup> These latter actions should result in greater reserve unit participations in joint training events.

**Reserve Component JPME Beyond Phase I: AJPME.** As previously noted, AJPME is a blended learning course modeled after JCWS and designed specifically for RC officers. The first class convened in September 2003. Prerequisites include having credit for Phase I at an intermediate or senior service school, being a commissioned officer in grades O-4 to O-6, and being selected by the member’s service. In 2006, AJPME’s throughput was 280 students; however, current plans are to ramp up to 500

<sup>16</sup> The JNTC initiative is expected to enhance the level of joint training in existing service and combatant command training programs by providing more specific guidance on conducting joint mission essential tasks, creating a persistent joint communication network to support joint training with more virtual and constructive capability, and accrediting training programs to ensure the appropriate joint environment exists.

<sup>17</sup> For more discussion, see the list of action items in DoD (2006c). Department of Defense Training Transformation Implementation Plan. Washington, D.C.

annually.<sup>18</sup> The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (ASD/RA) has drafted a revised DoD Instruction 1215.20 providing policy for RC joint officer management. It includes AJPME as a route for RC officers to fulfill PME requirements for designation as a joint qualified officer (JQO).<sup>19</sup>

**Joint and Combined Warfighting School.** As noted earlier, JCWS is a ten-week in-residence course of instruction that awards Phase II credit. JCWS educates O-4s through O-6s in the art and science of joint, interagency, and multinational planning and warfighting primarily at the operational level of war (JCS, 2005b, p. E-H-1). The JFSC commandant has initiated special efforts to make more seats available for RC members during each JCWS class. For example, the military student quotas in JCWS are allocated in accordance with the distribution of billets by service on the JDAL. However, as soon as any of the quotas are projected to be unfilled, the college advises the reserve components and makes those seats available for additional RC officers.<sup>20</sup>

These two efforts, AJPME and making more JCWS seats available, put into practice the intent of three recommendations made by the interviewees. Recall that the interviewees recommended the continuation of AJPME and that attendance be encouraged. DoD's policy and funding actions demonstrate its commitment to AJPME, and it plans to increase throughput. Also, recall that over 98 percent of the JCWS graduates are from the active components. Thus, the JFSC commandant's effort to make more seats available for RC members would implement the interviewees' recommendation to increase opportunities for RC and AC integrated JPME. Finally, both the increase in AJPME slots and the additional JCWS seats would increase RC in-residence JPME II attendance (or equivalent)—another of the joint education and training recommendations.

**Civilian Employment Information Program.** In 2004, DoD instituted a new reporting system that enables members of all seven reserve components to register their employers. This system makes it possible for DoD officials, including those responsible for mobilizing traditional guard and reserve members, to know who can be called up for active military duty without jeopardizing the civilian forces responsible for safeguarding our country.<sup>21</sup> The program provides another tool to help determine which units or members of the Individual Ready Reserve should be mobilized. Information about full-time employers also makes it possible for DoD officials to enhance employer

<sup>18</sup> This projection is based on discussions with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (ASD/RA).

<sup>19</sup> Joint qualified officer is one of the designations in the new Joint Qualification System (JQS), which is designed to identify military personnel who possess the abilities needed to achieve success in the joint/interagency environment. This new program is expected to allow DoD to better incorporate an officer's joint experiences and qualifications into assignment, promotion, and development decisions. The JQS also represents a "total force" approach that allows AC and RC officers to earn the same joint qualifications.

<sup>20</sup> This example is based on discussions with the Joint Forces Staff College commandant.

<sup>21</sup> For more discussion of information collected, see DoD (2004a).

support for the guard and reserve. The database includes standard occupation codes that could give DoD a clearer understanding of the vast array of specialized civilian skills available via the RC. According to ASD/RA, the efforts to populate the database were completed during calendar 2006.

The interviewees recognized that RC members have civilian experience that is relative to, and may be needed in, joint matters. Accordingly, the actions taken to implement the Civilian Employment Information Program would facilitate their recommendation to develop a system to catalog and track RC officers' civilian competencies.

### **Areas Warranting Additional Initiatives**

Based on discussion interviewees' recommendations, we recommend that DoD explore the feasibility of additional initiatives in two areas: joint education and joint career management.

**Joint Education.** DoD should explore additional options to increase RC JPME beyond Phase I. As discussed earlier, one option would be a blended/hybrid delivery of JPME II at the JFSC (eight weeks of resident and two weeks of nonresident instruction). By some estimates, this could increase annual throughput from 840 to 1,150. Another option would be to authorize accredited senior-level service schools to deliver JPME II via *nonresident* modes. Some have estimated this would provide the opportunity for over 37,000 O-5s and O-6s to gain critical knowledge and tools for operating in the joint environment.

**Joint Career Management.** The current initiatives are silent to three of the interviewees' recommendations in this area. First, while recognizing the need for more RC joint experience, training, and education, the interviewees felt that DoD did not have an accurate gauge for how much was needed and how much was being accomplished. Therefore, they recommended an initiative to determine both the demand for RC joint experience and the supply available to satisfy that demand. Second, the interviewees indicated that the methods used to identify and develop high-potential RC field grade officers are unclear and not well understood. They recommended initiating efforts to clarify policies and procedures for identifying and developing high-potential RC field-grade officers. Third, JRUs have been in existence since 1991. Several interviewees recommended the Department investigate ways to more effectively use JRUs.

To recapitulate: DoD has already started several initiatives to enhance the performance of RC members in joint matters. Although the current initiatives are significant, additional ones are warranted.

## Summary

The RC general and flag officers have a substantial leadership role in today's Total Force, including the joint arena. They make up over 40 percent of the total G/FO population, and one in five joint G/FO billets is filled by RC officers. Our research found that the competencies required to perform successfully in joint G/FO billets are the same whether the incumbent is from the reserve or active component. Some of these competencies are more common to joint matters. Yet DoD has not always adequately prepared RC G/FOs for joint assignments. A number of issues contribute to this situation, including but not limited to the following:

- Their first joint assignment is often at the G/FO level.
- Because of the nature of their service, most RC members do not have adequate access to in-residence joint education venues prior to AJPME.
- There is no universal attendance at CAPSTONE among RC officers selected for O-7.
- The RC personnel management system does not appropriately capture and illuminate
  - joint experience
  - joint education
  - joint individual training
  - civilian skills.
- RC units have not had sufficient participation in joint exercises, including participation in pre- and postexercise activities.

In addition to discussing the needed competencies, how they might be obtained, and systemic obstacles and impediments, we also offered recommendations and discussed initiatives that could enhance RC G/FO performance in joint matters. The recommendations relate to joint education and training, joint assignments, and overall RC joint career management. Four ongoing DoD initiatives were discussed and linked to the chapter's recommendations. While these four initiatives will assist in developing a significant cadre of RC officers prepared for joint matters, we propose that DoD pursue additional initiatives in two areas. Collectively, the ongoing and proposed initiatives should improve the readiness and ensure the qualifications of future senior RC officers selected to serve in joint matters.



## Enhancing Senior Noncommissioned Officers' Performance in Joint Matters

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The services are highly practiced in developing senior NCOs who have competencies that enable them to effectively lead subordinates and accomplish their service-specific missions. The CJCS vision of joint leaders (JCS, 2005a, p. 2), however, describes individuals who are proficient not only in the leadership and warfighting tasks of their own services but also in multiservice, multinational, and interagency environments. The military services spend a lot of time during commissioned officers' careers preparing them for duty in a joint environment. But no comparable training exists to prepare SNCOs for joint matters. To better prepare SNCOs for joint matters, OSD and the services must consider how SNCOs' skills, knowledge, and abilities (SKAs) are effectively brought to bear to fulfill their joint roles. More fundamentally, what are these SKAs and other attributes? In this chapter, based primarily on the interviews and data analysis, we offer answers to those questions by discussing both SNCO performance in joint matters and recommendations to improve that performance.

Senior NCOs represent the pinnacle of the enlisted ranks and could become a tremendous resource for helping instill jointness in the enlisted force across the military services. The officer corps expects these NCOs to be tactically, technically, and operationally proficient. The officer corps depends upon them to train, coach, and mentor their subordinates. This is aptly summarized in the Army's noncommissioned officer vision statement (DA, 2002, p. 1):

A Noncommissioned Officer Corps grounded in heritage, values, and tradition that embodies the warrior ethos; values perpetual learning, and is capable of leading, training, and motivating soldiers. We must always be a Noncommissioned Officer Corps that—

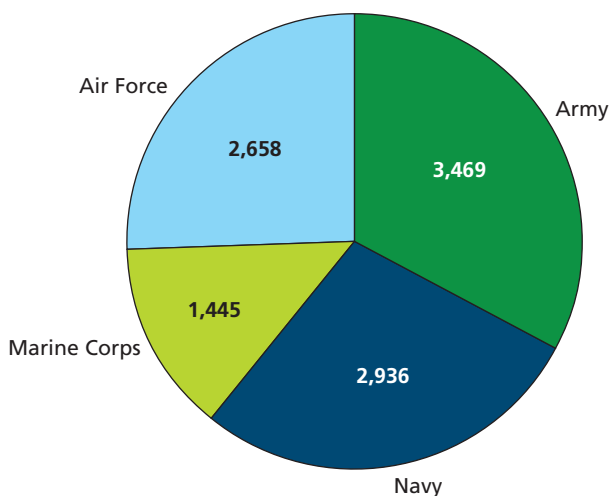
- Leads by example.
- Trains from experience.
- Enforces and maintains standards.
- Takes care of soldiers.
- Adapts to a changing world.

## Joint Senior Noncommissioned Officer Population

As Figure 5.1 shows, there were 10,508 E-9s on active duty in July 2006. This equates to almost 1 percent of the 1,141,280 enlisted personnel serving on active duty at that time. Most senior NCOs will experience some aspect of joint service without being assigned to joint organizations; however, a small number will receive such an assignment. As Figure 5.2 shows, there are about 180 E-9 billets in joint organizations, such as the Joint Staff, unified combatant commands, and the National Defense University. They cover a variety of jobs, including senior enlisted leader, senior enlisted advisor, command sergeant major, command chief, J2 NCOIC (noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Intelligence), and operations sergeant major.

These numbers show that only 1.7 percent of the services' E-9 positions are in joint organizations. However, the number of SNCOs serving in the joint environment is expected to increase with the growth of Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ). In today's JFHQ, many of the traditional duties and responsibilities of commissioned officers are being shared with SNCOs. As with positions in combatant command headquarters, these latter jobs routinely require knowledge of each service's capabilities, organizational structure, and culture to ensure interoperability. As discussed later in this chapter, it quickly becomes evident that the ability to function effectively in such an environment depends on understanding joint operations and executing joint relationships. A challenge facing the Joint Staff, joint organizations, and the services is to develop a vision for the role of senior NCOs in the joint arena that cuts across the services.

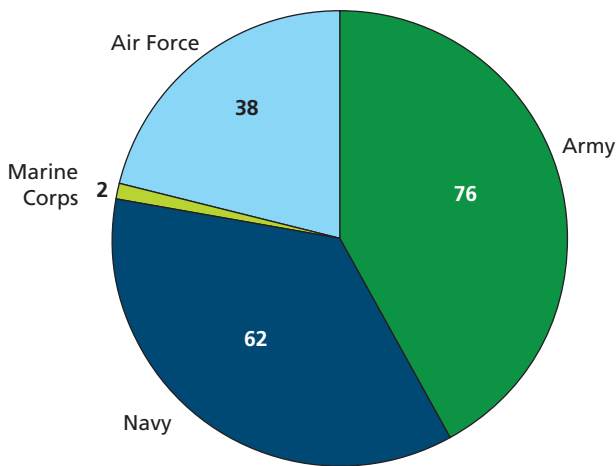
**Figure 5.1**  
**Number of E-9s Across DoD, by Service**



SOURCE: DMDC Database, as of July 2006.

RAND MG621-5.1

**Figure 5.2**  
**E-9 Billets in Joint Organizations**



SOURCE: Joint Manpower and Personnel System (eJMAPS)  
Data Extract.  
RAND MG621-5.2

In general, our interviewees felt that the quality of individual selected for joint SNCO leadership positions was quite good, and they illustrated this point by noting case after case of extremely high performance. Nonetheless, all expressed strongly their belief that the performance of the broader joint SNCO population suffers from a lack of the developmental opportunities that most enable successful performance. They contended that many senior NCOs arrive at their E-9 positions having had little or no training in joint matters and absent any familiarity with other services' structures, protocols and procedures, and cultures. This circumstance forces new incumbents to grapple with steep on-the-job learning curves, delaying their readiness for full functionality.

**SNCO Competencies Needed for Success in Joint Matters**

As noted in the 2006 QDR (p. 77),

The combination of joint, combined, and interagency capabilities in modern warfare represents the next step in the evolution of joint warfighting and places new demands on [DoD's] training and education processes.

In this section, we explore what competencies will be needed by SNCOs to be successful in modern joint warfare.

### **SKAs Needed for Successful Performance**

A large portion of the skills, knowledge, and abilities that characterize effective leadership within the services also figure prominently in the joint arena. In their descriptions of successful performers in joint matters, our interviewees regularly referred to such core competencies as (1) being a self-starter, (2) working autonomously, (3) communicating effectively, and (4) trusting and being trusted by subordinates, peers, and superiors. All emphasized the value of personal characteristics and management skills. The interviewees associated the following attributes with “great” senior NCOs in joint matters:<sup>1</sup>

- a broad operational perspective, rooted in breadth of experiences
- a good attitude and open-mindedness
- willingness to take a multiservice perspective on problems and solutions
- strong leadership skills
- ability to build and maintain key relationships, including those with senior G/FO leaders from all U.S. military services and international partners
- adaptability and the ability to learn on the job
- the ability to see and understand the joint operational “big picture.”

### **Additional SKAs Needed by Senior NCOs in Joint Positions**

Our interviewees highlighted joint-specific SKAs by stressing the importance of such characteristics as flexibility and receptiveness to new ways of operating and familiarity with concepts, tactics, and strategies fundamental to joint operations. Particular attention was given to the willingness to be open minded in interactions with sister services. Explanations of open-mindedness included references to such tendencies and behaviors as attitude toward learning other services’ ways, adaptability and flexibility, humility, and the adoption of a team-based work ethic.

The weight given to open-mindedness became particularly pronounced with regard to a senior NCO’s ability to focus on the requirements of the mission—to put aside service parochialism—in favor of looking across all services to identify the strategies and tools best suited to getting the job done. This capacity to recognize value in other services and to leverage it for the betterment of the mission was described regularly and positively as an aptitude for “working purple without going purple.”<sup>2</sup> Many interviewees stressed that a senior NCO’s ability to manage effectively across services

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<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest that “good” performers lack these attributes entirely or that they have them to a lesser degree—or that they merely have some, but not all of them. There was, in any case, a high degree of consistency on this subject; i.e., great performers have these seven qualities. As Leo Durocher said of Willie Mays: “He could do the five things you have to do to be a superstar: hit, hit with power, run, field, and throw. The same could be said of our respondents’ view of “great SNCO performance in joint matters”: they have to have these attributes.

<sup>2</sup> This phrase refers to service members’ ability to objectively work on joint issues and operations without losing the perspectives of their own military branch.

is closely related to a predisposition to engage partners without judgment and the willingness to compromise and change.

## **Requisite Experiences, Education, and Training**

Our interviewees felt that a senior NCO's propensity to demonstrate joint core competencies was greater when he or she had previously been immersed in a shared, cooperative environment, such as receiving training or education at another service's academy, participating in the Keystone program, or completing an assignment in a joint operating environment at the E-6 to E-8 level. They credited these immersion experiences with promoting open-mindedness and a team-oriented attitude by providing senior NCOs a basic working knowledge of how other services are organized while also offering insight into their cultures.

Developmental assignments are valuable immersion opportunities. They would include positions in joint organizations such as the CoCOMs, the Joint Staff, and OSD. These assignments could also include positions in sister-service organizations—an Army NCO applying his or her technical or domain knowledge in Air Force organization (e.g., as an air-ground liaison). The senior leaders with whom we spoke stressed that this kind of early exposure to joint work, and to the structures and cultures of other services, would greatly advance a senior NCO's level of preparation to assume a joint leadership position later on.

Of the immersion experiences available to senior NCOs, however, all the senior leaders with whom we spoke highlighted joint operational experience—combat tours—as being of singular importance to a senior NCO's ability to perform successfully in a later joint leadership role. According to our interviewees, this experience can be gained in either a command or staff capacity and is significant both for the credibility it confers upon the senior NCO and for the direct training it provides in joint tactics and strategies. They emphasized that combat experience at the tactical level allows senior NCOs to enter into their joint positions “operationally attuned,” enabling them to communicate well with troops (to “speak purple”) and priming them to adjust rapidly to new requirements and responsibilities.

## **Systemic Obstacles and Impediments**

Collectively, our senior leaders' assessments indicate that early exposure to other services is consistently predictive of effective senior NCO performance in joint matters. Accordingly, we asked the interviewees if they had observed or experienced any systemic factors that, in their judgment, impeded the acquisition of this exposure prior to their being assigned to a joint E-9 position. Responses invariably included concern

that senior NCOs are not well educated in joint matters by the time they assume a joint-level E-9 position, have only limited access to joint training opportunities, and badly lack parent-service support for developmental assignments at more junior (E-8 and below) levels. We summarized their comments into three groups.

### **Education and Training**

There was consensus among our interviewees that joint education and training for senior NCOs is insufficient both in quality and in quantity. Currently, no DoD-wide curriculum for educating service members on the fundamentals of joint operations exists; accordingly, the content of instruction varies between and among the service NCO academies. No joint senior enlisted academy exists; few senior noncommissioned officers have the opportunity to train at other services' institutions; and Keystone—which our interviewees highlight as a valuable course—is available to senior NCOs only very late in their careers. This absence of consolidated, consistent, and mutual educational programs hinders the development of a shared knowledge base and common understanding among senior NCOs of the concepts, tactics, and strategies that are fundamental to joint work.

### **Developmental Assignments**

The lack of support within the services and OSD for developmental assignments earlier in an NCO's career inhibits the development of senior NCO joint knowledge and competencies. Furthermore, some of the services' promotion systems do not adequately recognize and communicate the value of this type of cross-service or joint experience. The perception is that even high-achieving senior NCOs who pursue non-service-specific experiences will be "punished" or "left behind" by their parent service after joint duty.

The majority of the senior leaders we interviewed told us that shortcomings in senior NCO training regimens and opportunities for developmental experiences in joint operating environments derive in large measure from resource constraints. Providing these opportunities costs the services money and productivity. School slots must be funded. Further, demanding assignment cycles with repetitive deployments too often leave parent-service seats unfilled. Nonetheless, they argue that unwillingness to prioritize these activities, coupled with the perception that promotion cycles reward repetitive service assignments, suggests that the military services have yet to fully internalize and culturally adjust to the requirements of the current (and anticipated future) joint operations environment.

### **Overall Career Management**

Several of our interviewees indicated that deficiencies in senior NCO joint education and assignment experiences are indicative of a larger problem: the absence of a centralized, integrated enlisted officer career management component in OSD. Indeed, many

noted the absence of legal and policy underpinnings and structures similar to those that have systematized the training, education, promotion, and assignments of active-duty officers in joint matters.

For the effectiveness of senior NCOs in joint positions to improve, the services and OSD must address shortcomings in education and training and developmental assignment within the larger context of overall senior NCO career management.

## **Recommendation for Enhancing Senior NCO Performance in Joint Matters**

The previous section identified significant impediments to senior NCO development in three key areas: joint education and training, joint experiences, and overall career management. The 2006 QDR report and the Training Transformation Implementation Plan—as well as several other DoD documents—begin to address these issues. This section reviews current and planned DoD efforts and provides recommendations for additional initiatives that can further enhance SNCO exposure to the training and operational experiences that cultivate competencies associated with effective performance in joint matters.

### **Joint Education and Training**

OSD has launched the Strategic Plan for Transforming DoD Training to improve joint training and education for the Total Force: active and reserve components, DoD civilians, and contractors. The Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), in collaboration with the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commanders of U.S. Forces Command and Special Operations Command, and the Under Secretaries of Defense, is tasked to revise DoD's strategy to advance the transformation of training and education of the Total Force to

- accommodate new missions and warfighting concepts
- fill joint training gaps and seams
- build partner capacity
- achieve greater joint effectiveness and efficiency.<sup>3</sup>

As stated in the DoD Training Transformation Implementation Plan (DoD, 2006c, p. 1):

Department of Defense policy requires all personnel and components to train on their Mission Essential Tasks to established standards to provide the capabilities

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<sup>3</sup> For more discussion, see DoD (2006d).

that support the combatant commanders and the Joint Operations Concepts across all phases of Joint Campaigns and throughout the spectrum of service, joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational operations. The Training Transformation Program supports this capstone policy requirement through two primary, interrelated missions:

- Better enable joint operations.
- Enable the continuous, capabilities-based transformation of the Department of Defense.<sup>4</sup>

The Training Transformation Program employs a modified version of the spiral-development technique, which is a “build-a-little, test-a-little” approach to continuously assessing the ways and means of achieving the policy end state, and then adjusting as necessary to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. The ultimate goal is to provide combatant commanders with better-prepared individuals, units, staffs, and organizations that are aligned with their joint operational needs.

The Joint Staff, services, and combatant commands have also established two assignment-oriented joint PME programs for enlisted service members assigned or slated for positions in joint organizations. The first is a stand-alone Web-based course that provides education in national military capabilities and organization, a national security and armed forces overview, and introduction to joint operations. The second is the Keystone course, designed to prepare command-level senior enlisted leaders for service in a G/FO joint headquarters. Keystone emphasizes national military capabilities and organization; joint doctrine; service, joint, interagency, and multinational capabilities; and defense acquisition and resourcing.

The Keystone course in particular was recognized by our interviewees as making a valuable contribution to SNCO preparedness for joint senior leadership roles. Nonetheless, our respondents identified two shortcomings the Strategic Plan for Transforming DoD Training and joint PME programs do not address. Specifically, they believe that current practices can be improved by providing SNCOs training in joint matters significantly earlier in their careers and by increasing the number and frequency of opportunities for multiservice participation in educational immersion programs.

*Sooner is better.* Growing leaders is a service responsibility—it is incumbent upon each to identify a cadre of talented senior noncommissioned officers, and to develop them to meet the needs not only of the service itself, but also of the joint force. Improvement in SNCO performance begins, therefore, with a formalized commitment from the services—until now lacking in practice if not in principle—to provide early exposure to the doctrine, tactics, collaborative information environments, and interagency processes that define joint work. Currently, SNCO education in joint matters too often begins and ends with E-9 attendance at Keystone; our interviewees felt that the value

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<sup>4</sup> The policy is set forth in paragraph 4.2 of DoD (2004b).

of the program was diminished by its availability to SNCOs only late in their careers. Indeed, many argued that basic instruction in jointness, including familiarization with the structures, roles, and missions of other services, should begin as early as at the E-6 level, and that the value of Keystone would be enhanced by establishing it as an advanced module for at least some subset of SNCOs considered likely to advance to E-9 joint leadership positions.

*More is better.* In addition to changes made internally, the services must also work collaboratively to provide more noncommissioned officers with opportunities to experience immersion in a variety of shared educational environments. The senior leaders with whom we spoke emphasized that such experiences cultivate cultural understanding and have a positive effect upon service attitudes toward jointness. The quantity and frequency of student exchange—a member of one service attending the academy of another—therefore, should be expanded, and the feasibility of instituting a Joint Senior Enlisted Leader Academy should at least be explored.

Based on our interviews, we recommend the following:

- Basic training in joint matters, including introduction to the structures, roles, and missions of other services, could begin as early as E-6, and should be no later than E-8. Where appropriate, OSD should standardize the content of joint training modules across services.
- Consideration should be given to providing Keystone as an advanced module available to a subset of senior enlisted leaders who are considered likely candidates for advancement to joint E-9 leadership positions.
- Opportunities to receive instruction from service academies other than a senior NCO's own should be expanded—even at the basic NCO educational level.
- The services, Joint Staff, and OSD should explore the feasibility of instituting a Joint Senior Enlisted Leader Academy.

OSD should also continue to explore options that would increase SNCO participation in critical joint training exercises. In the spirit of the 2006 Training Transformation Implementation Plan, more deeply integrating SNCOs into exercises aimed at ensuring the readiness of the Total Force would leverage the capabilities and experiences of this element of the senior force, as well as provide another level of education and development for the best-performing SNCOs of each service—many of whom will eventually take on joint leadership duties. In this vein, requiring service-level SNCO participation in exercises specific to a particular CoCOM's area of responsibility would serve a valuable developmental purpose for SNCOs not yet assigned, but potentially assignable, to that CoCOM (or to its supporting elements).

### Joint Assignments

As highlighted in the 2004 National Military Strategy (p. 15), “Defeating adaptive adversaries requires flexible, modular and deployable joint forces with the ability to combine the strengths of individual Services, combatant commands, other government agencies and multinational partners.” This increasing level of interdependence requires joint knowledge, skills, and abilities to be exercised at lower levels of command than ever before, and demands that SNCOs take on substantial strategic and operational roles in addition to their more traditional tactical responsibilities. Our interviewees credited prior work in a joint environment as the attribute most strongly related to SNCO preparedness to assume joint leadership positions in today’s dynamic, multilateral global environment.

At the DoD level, there is a need to formalize policies and guidance that emphasize the importance and value of cultivating joint experience within the NCO corps. For their part, the services must be much more willing to release NCOs from service-specific positions in favor of positions in joint organizations or other positions in joint operating environments earlier in their careers. Some of these developmental assignments may be in joint organizations, such as JTFs or CoCOMs; some may be simple service-to-service exchanges in which one technically skilled SNCO trades places with another. To encourage these exchanges, the services may need to review their promotion processes, and adjust them if necessary, to appropriately reflect the value of rotational assignments. Such efforts are an important step in correcting the perception that those who pursue joint developmental assignments are left behind by their own services. Further, to prevent rotations from being ad hoc and to fully leverage their positive developmental effects, the services and OSD will need to work together to develop a centralized mechanism and standardized process for identifying and facilitating rotations throughout DoD.

We recommend the following:

- Opportunities for assignment to joint organizations and other positions in joint operating environments should be made available earlier in a noncommissioned officer’s career.
- The services should review their promotion systems to ensure they do not inadvertently penalize NCOs who pursue developmental joint experiences—and where practicable, implement changes to adequately reflect the value of joint assignments.
- A centralized mechanism and standardized procedure should be developed to identify and facilitate joint rotational opportunities throughout DoD.

## Joint Career Management

Improvements made internal to the services' education and assignment practices alone will not provide the kind of consistent, long-term development of well-trained, well-prepared SNCO leaders that the joint force of today, or tomorrow, requires. To the contrary, for a joint SNCO development process to be truly enduring, it must be supported by a personnel management process that is designed to integrate and structure educational and assignment experiences into a deliberate and distinguishable career path.

For its officers, OSD favors the concept of a single set of joint qualification standards with alternative, flexible avenues to those qualifications. Although the statutory resident education, assignment, and promotion requirements associated with officer qualifications cannot be duplicated for the SNCO force, a system similar in concept, if not in design, could provide adequate direction without being overly rigid or formulaic. Specifically, a joint SNCO career path could provide broadly based guidance that codifies the minimum joint-specific education and assignment requirements for nomination to joint leadership positions—without delimiting which courses must be completed or which positions must be held in particular.<sup>5</sup>

Internal to this framework, the services would retain responsibility for identifying and grooming talent for the joint career path. As discussed previously, this may entail adjusting promotion structures to ensure the desirability and competitiveness of joint careers and encouraging mentorship relationships between younger and more-experienced SNCOs. OSD can facilitate these service efforts by building and maintaining a current database that contains information about joint positions as they become available and standardizing procedures for facilitating joint rotational opportunities throughout DoD.

We recommend the following:

- Broad guidelines should be developed to provide the services guidance in preparing SNCOs for joint E-9 leadership positions. These guidelines should identify the minimum level of joint-specific education (Keystone, attendance at another service's academy) and minimum level of experience in joint organizations or other joint operating environments necessary for nomination to joint leadership positions.
- Procedures should be codified for joint leadership position nominations. These procedures should involve the military services, Joint Staff, and OSD and should include, but not be limited to, a joint-level, centrally managed database on joint positions and eligible SNCOs.

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<sup>5</sup> There was consensus among our interviewees that these E-9 selections should ultimately be made by OSD with consultation from the services.

Implementation of the above training, assignment, and career management recommendations has the potential to add depth, breadth, and structure to the current SNCO development process. Together, they constitute a means of enhancing the readiness, and ensuring the qualifications, of the larger pool of SNCO candidates from which future E-9 joint senior leaders will be selected.

## Summary

As the two preceding chapters did, this chapter focused on the performance of a specific category of human capital in joint matters—in this instance, senior NCOs (E-9s). Our research found that the basic competencies required for SNCOs in joint billets are comparable to those required for high performance within the services. Joint SNCO leadership roles, however, often require proficiency in additional areas—particularly those involved in managing interservice and partner relationships. Our interviewees indicated that the most successful SNCOs in joint positions are those who are familiar with the structures and capabilities of other services, who have joint operational experience, and who are willing to leverage the strengths of all services to complete a mission. This chapter elaborated on joint SNCO competencies and the requisite experiences, education, and training.

Currently, SNCO preparation for joint leadership positions suffers from shortcomings in the following areas: joint education and training, joint experience, and career management. Accordingly, the chapter also reviewed current and planned DoD efforts in those areas. Within each area, we presented recommendations for additional initiatives that should improve DoD's ability to consistently produce the well-trained, well-prepared SNCO leaders that the joint force of today, and tomorrow, requires.

## Observations and Recommendations

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As stated in Chapter One, this report summarizes the results of three separate research efforts—each addressing a separate category of senior leader. Chapters Two, Three, and Four addressed SES members, RC G/FOs, and senior NCOs, respectively. We conclude by looking across those senior leader groupings and providing some overarching observations and suggested actions.

### Observations

*Interviewees used similar phrases but in different contexts.* Although the interviewees were different for each of the studies, they used similar terms and expressions to describe the critical attributes needed for success in joint matters. As the interviews continued, however, it became clear that the terms could not be detached from the contexts in which they were used—the contexts in which the leaders are expected to excel: scope of responsibilities, type of organization, and level of joint activity (strategic, operational, and tactical).

*Joint development is a subset of senior leader development.* Across the three groups, the interviewees consistently stressed that a large portion of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that characterize effective leadership in the joint arena is comparable to that in nonjoint positions, whether within the services or another component of DoD. The most important attributes appear to be transferable from organization to organization and nonjoint to joint. Nevertheless, the interviewees also suggested that senior leaders serving in joint matters needed *additional* competencies that relate to a joint perspective, optimizing joint capability, and the operational and strategic art of joint warfare.

*More senior leaders need training in joint matters.* The lack of purposeful development in joint matters has caused many of these senior leaders to lack appropriate “joint acumen.” Thus, more deliberate mid-career development is needed for prospective SES members, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs to help ensure that they are properly prepared for joint senior leadership positions. These development programs would include selecting high-potential, mid-career people and giving them appropriate experiences, training, and education in joint matters. Also, jointness extends beyond traditional joint organi-

zations. As other research has found for active-duty officers, our research indicates that there are many SES members, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs outside of joint organizations who are engaged in joint matters (Kirby et al., 2006).

*Systemic obstacles exist.* Although the specific details vary among the three groups, each faces systemic obstacles that impede the acquisition of the requisite joint experience, education, and training. The common obstacles are associated with funding, inadequate understanding of concepts for joint development, and the absence of management systems to track and facilitate joint experience.

## Suggested Actions

*Continue with the implementation of the current initiatives.* OSD, the Joint Staff, and the services have implemented initiatives designed to improve the performance of SES members, RC G/FOs, and senior NCOs in joint matters. Thus, many of the recommendations proposed in this study are already being addressed by the initiatives listed below. SES initiatives include

- Developing 21st Century DoD Senior Executive Service Leaders
- Pilot Program for the Recruitment of SES positions in Combatant Commands
- Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP) and DoD Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP)
- the DoD National Security Personnel System (NSPS).

RC G/FO initiatives include

- Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management (JOM) and Joint Professional Military Education (JPME)
- Strategic Plan for Transforming DoD Training
- Reserve Component JPME Beyond Phase I
- Civilian Employment Information Program.

Senior NCO initiatives include

- Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) course
- Keystone Program for Senior Enlisted Leaders.

*Explore the implementation of additional initiatives.* To create a larger pool of joint qualified SES members, RC G/FOs, and SNCOs, we recommend developing additional initiatives in the following areas:

For SES members:

- more joint education and training
- cross-service and interagency assignments.

For RC G/FOs:

- additional options to increase RC JPME beyond Phase I
- improved RC joint career management.

For senior NCOs:

- more and earlier (perhaps E-6, but not later than E-8) training in joint matters
- additional opportunities to receive instruction from service academies other than a senior NCO's own service
- exploration of the feasibility of instituting a Joint Senior Enlisted Leader Academy
- a review by the services of their respective promotion systems to ensure they do not inadvertently penalize NCOs who pursue development joint experiences
- a centralized mechanism and standardized procedures to identify and facilitate joint rotational opportunities
- establishing broad guidelines to give the services guidance in preparing SNCOs for joint E-9 leadership positions
- codifying procedures for nominating SNCOs for joint leadership positions.

*Conduct appropriate cost/benefit analyses.* The next step, which was beyond the scope of this research, would be to conduct appropriate cost/benefit analyses of possible initiatives.



## Protocols for the First Series of Interviews

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### Senior Leader Interview Protocol: 4- and 3-Star (or equivalent)

**Background:** Toward DoD’s goal of ensuring that the pool of SES personnel eligible for senior-level assignments is the best available (and best trained), RAND has been asked to conduct interviews and survey-based studies of *SES performance in joint matters*, along with exploring *initiatives to improve these*.

**Purpose of This Interview:** We would like you to help us grasp the “big picture” with respect to SES performance in joint matters, and also, tell us: (1) what makes senior civil servants successful in a joint environment and what inhibits success and (2) how to improve that performance.

#### Part I—SES Member Performance

1. Can you reflect on how well SESs performed in Joint matters when you were \_\_\_\_\_?
2. As you reflect back on the *high-performing* SESs in your organization(s):
  - What distinguished a *great* SES from a good one?
  - What broad, distinguishing characteristics did those officials have—such as operational experience, leadership, functional area expertise, language and diplomatic skills?
  - Was it important for these personnel to have had advance knowledge of the joint arena and other service cultures (resulting from prior assignment, education, etc.)?
3. What, if any, were the critical experiences (assignments, professional education, training) that most aided the development of the competencies employed by SESs?
4. What broadly distinguishes effective SES performance in a joint environment from service-specific leadership?
5. Were you ever in a position to select SES leaders for the joint arena?

- If so, what were the critical attributes you considered?
- Would those have been different if you were selecting for a service-specific position?
- Were there attributes you wanted to see that NONE of the candidates possessed? If yes, what were they?

## Part II—Initiatives to Improve SES Performance

6. Briefly, what are the initiatives that you'd undertake to improve SES performance in Joint matters, broadly speaking?
7. What are the obstacles . . . *the impediments* . . . to implementing initiatives that would improve (SES) performance in joint matters?
8. What are the most critical SES competencies needed in joint organizations? Please rank-order a few that we envision:
  - \_\_\_ Specific domain knowledge (e.g., logistics; acquisition; finance)
  - \_\_\_ Enterprise knowledge
  - \_\_\_ Leadership skills
  - \_\_\_ Management skills
  - \_\_\_ Interagency integration
  - \_\_\_ Joint Force integration
  - \_\_\_ Other?

## Joint Reserve Component G/FO Interview Protocol

The senior leader interviews were conducted as open-ended discussions in a one-on-one setting. Interviewers used the protocol below to ensure that specific topics were covered during the interviews.

**Background:** Toward DoD's goal of ensuring that the pool of Reserve Component General and Flag Officers (G/FOs) eligible for senior-level joint assignments is the best available (and best trained), RAND has been asked to conduct interviews and survey-based studies of *G/FOs in joint matters*, along with exploring *initiatives to improve these*.

**Purpose of This Interview:** We would like you to help us grasp the “big picture” with respect to Reserve Component G/FO performance in joint matters, and also, tell us (1) what makes these senior leaders successful in a joint environment and what inhibits success and (2) how to improve that performance.

## Part I—Reserve Component G/FO Performance

1. Can you reflect on how well Reserve Component G/FOs performed in joint matters when you were\_\_\_\_\_?
2. As you reflect back on the *high-performing* G/FOs in your organization(s):
  - What distinguished a *great* Reserve Component G/FO from a good one?
  - What broad, distinguishing characteristics did those officers have—such as operational experience, leadership, functional area expertise, language and diplomatic skills?
  - Was it important for these officers to have had advance knowledge of the joint arena and other service cultures (resulting from prior assignment, education, etc.)?
3. What, if any, were the critical experiences (assignments, professional education, training) that most aided the development of the competencies employed by these officers?
4. What broadly distinguishes effective Reserve Component G/FO performance in a joint environment from service-specific leadership?
5. Were you ever in a position to select Reserve Component G/FO leaders for the joint arena?
  - If so, what were the critical attributes you considered?
  - Would those have been different if you were selecting for a service-specific position?
  - Were there attributes you wanted to see that NONE of the candidates possessed? If yes, what were they?

## Part II—Initiatives to Improve Reserve Component G/FO Performance

6. Briefly, what are the initiatives that you'd undertake to improve Reserve Component G/FO performance in joint matters, broadly speaking?
7. What are the obstacles . . . *the impediments* . . . to implementing initiatives that would improve Reserve Component G/FO performance in joint matters?
8. What are the most critical Reserve Component G/FO competencies needed in joint organizations? Please rank-order a few that we envision:
  - Specific domain knowledge (e.g., logistics; acquisition; finance)
  - Enterprise knowledge
  - Leadership skills
  - Management skillsInteragency integration
  - Joint Force integration
  - Other?

## Senior Noncommissioned Officer Interview Protocol

The senior leader interviews were conducted as open-ended discussions in a one-on-one setting. Interviewers used the protocol below to ensure that specific topics were covered during the interviews.

**Background:** Toward DoD's goal of ensuring that the pool of senior noncommissioned officers (SNCOs) eligible for senior-level joint assignments is the best available (and best trained), RAND has been asked to conduct interviews and survey-based studies of *SNCOs in joint matters*, along with exploring *initiatives to improve these*.

**Purpose of This Interview:** We would like you to help us grasp the "big picture" with respect to SNCO performance in joint matters, and also tell us (1) what makes these senior leaders successful in a joint environment and what inhibits success and (2) how to improve that performance.

### Part I—Senior NCO Performance

1. Can you reflect on how well SNCOs performed in joint matters when you were\_\_\_\_\_?
2. As you reflect back on the *high-performing* SNCOs in your organization(s):
  - What distinguished a *great* SNCO from a good one?
  - What broad, distinguishing characteristics did those individuals have—such as operational experience, leadership, functional area expertise, language and diplomatic skills?
  - Was it important for these individuals to have had advance knowledge of the joint arena and other service cultures (resulting from prior assignment, education, etc.)?
3. What, if any, were the critical experiences (assignments, professional education, training) that most aided the development of the competencies employed by these SNCOs?
4. What broadly distinguishes effective SNCO performance in a joint environment from service-specific leadership?
5. Were you ever in a position to select SNCO leaders for the joint arena?
 

If so, what were the critical attributes you considered?

  - Would those have been different if you were selecting for a service-specific position?
  - Were there attributes you wanted to see that NONE of the candidates possessed? If yes, what were they?

## Part II—Initiatives to Improve Senior NCO Performance

6. Briefly, what are the initiatives that you'd undertake to improve SNCO performance in joint matters, broadly speaking?
7. What are the obstacles . . . *the impediments* . . . to implementing initiatives that would improve SNCO performance in joint matters?
8. What are the most critical SNCO competencies needed in joint organizations? Please rank-order a few that we envision:
  - Specific domain knowledge (e.g., logistics; acquisition; finance)
  - Enterprise knowledge
  - Leadership skills
  - Management skills
  - Interagency integration
  - Joint Force integration
  - Other?



## **Protocols for the Second Series of Interviews or Focus Groups**

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### **Senior Executive Service (SES) Members in Joint Matters**

**(Questions to explore during briefing)**

#### **Assessment Review:**

1. During our earlier interviews, the interviewees indicated joint SES jobs required the same attributes as nonjoint SES jobs: broad perspective, strong leadership skills, ability to build and maintain key relationships, ability to learn on the job, ability to think about the mission in both vertical and horizontal dimensions, and ability to get results. What attributes would you add to this list and why?
2. With respect to joint matters, it has been suggested that individual performance may span the entire range; however, overall effectiveness is affected by three common difficulties: (1) a tendency to be too narrowly focused, (2) OSD, Joint Staff, and CoCOM functions are only performed at those levels resulting in steep learning curve, and (3) insufficient understanding of the various service cultures. Do you agree or disagree? Why? What would you add or subtract from the list?
3. How would you characterize the performance of SES member in joint matters?

#### **Earlier Interviews Resulting in Several Themes for Improving SES Performance in Joint Matters:**

4. One of the themes is that preparation should focus on high-potential people in grades GS-14 through GS-15. This preparation should include purposeful job rotation, education, and training. Do you agree or disagree and why?
  - a. Are there specific jobs, education, and training experiences that are needed to prepare the person for jobs dealing with joint matters?

5. Another theme is that incentives are needed to entice large numbers of highly talented GS-14/15s to volunteer for job rotation, education, and training. Again, do you agree or disagree and why?
  - a. Do you have examples of specific incentives that should be offered?
6. A third theme is that incentives are needed to encourage organizations to groom talented people and make them available for job rotation, education, and training. Again, do you agree or disagree and why?
  - a. Do you have examples of specific incentives that should be offered?
7. A fourth theme is the need to define more clearly what “joint” means in the SES context and describe possible career paths that would prepare people for these positions.
  - a. From your perspective, how would the requirements for “joint” SES positions differ from those for nonjoint positions?
  - b. How would the career paths for ideal candidates for “joint” SES positions differ from those of ideal candidates for nonjoint SES positions?

**Earlier interviews suggested several obstacles facing DoD regarding SES performance in joint matters:**

8. These obstacles include lack of sufficient resources (i.e., dollars, developmental billets), multiple career management structures across services and OSD, an appraisal/bonus system that often discourages people from broadening assignments, mindsets that discourage developmental and rotation assignments, and poorly understood development concepts.
9. Are some of the obstacles more challenging than others? Why?
10. What are ways to overcome these obstacles?

**From the interviews, we have deduced recommendations in three broad categories: SES management, selection and assignments, and education/training. Let’s review them, critique them, and discuss ways for implementing them:**

11. SES management for “joint” positions
  - a. What are the characteristics of an effective SES Management System for “joint” positions and people?
    - i. Is such a system needed? Why or why not?
    - ii. Should the system manage the flow of people to and from “joint” and/or other key positions?
  - b. Should an office(s) be established with these responsibilities?

- i. Where should it (they) be located? (OSD, Joint Staff, each service?)
- ii. What and how much authority should be vested in an office?

## 12. Selection and Assignments

- a. How would the “system” identify the appropriate high potential GS-13/15s for broadening into the “joint” arena?
- b. How would the “system” make it possible for organizations to give the appropriate people the requisite joint assignments and education to prepare them for possible future positions as SESs in joint matters?
- c. It has been suggested that a small number of positions, spread across DoD, needs to be centrally controlled to achieve developmental objectives. Do you agree or disagree and why?
- d. It has been suggested that a mechanism to appropriately place people after they complete broadening/developmental assignments is needed? Do you agree or disagree and why?
- e. What office would manage these activities?

## 13. Education/training

- a. Generally, earlier interviews emphasized experiential on-the-job training with formal training as additive. Do you agree or disagree and why?
- b. However, the interviews generally agreed “SES-contenders” should be sent to in-residence service PME. Do you agree or disagree and why?
- c. Do you have examples of education/training changes that should be made in the near term?

**With respect to performance of SES in joint matters, have we missed any important topics?**

- 14. What topic? Why important? What would be recommendation to DoD? How would it be implemented?

## **Reserve Component G/FO Focus Group Protocol**

The protocol below was used as a read-ahead for focus group sessions as well as a guide during the sessions. As a result of the focus group sessions, the findings and recommendations were refined, but the protocol presented here does not reflect those refinements.

## **Reserve Component General/Flag Officers in Joint Matters**

### **(Questions to explore during briefing)**

#### **Assessment Review:**

1. During our earlier research, we found that RC G/FOs serving in joint positions require joint competencies similar to their active counterparts. However, in our current research the interviews suggest RC G/FOs face additional challenges: insufficient opportunity to become joint-familiar, RC G/FOs are placed in joint staff positions without full grasp of joint language and processes, not familiar with AC planning tools and dated/separate RC joint training. Do you agree or disagree? Why? What would you add or subtract from the list?
2. Although the interviews suggest some RC G/FOs may face additional challenges in joint matters, the interviews also suggest RC G/FOs bring additional assets such as civilian perspective/civilian skills, ability to deal with and motivate non-military staffs, and important links to local communities and building “national resolve.” Do you agree or disagree? Why? What would you add or subtract from the list?

#### **Earlier interviews resulted in several themes for improving G/FO performance in joint matters:**

3. One of the themes is preparation should focus on high-potential people in the ranks of O-4/O-5. This preparation should include a joint assignment, combatant command exposure, command assignments, and diversity of assignments. Do you agree or disagree and why?
  - a. Are there specific assignments that are needed to prepare RC personnel for G/FO jobs dealing with joint matters?
4. Another theme relates to the importance of professional military education, especially war colleges and joint PME. In-residence is the preferred method, however, that presents major challenges for most RC members. Electronic collaboration coupled with distance learning may be an acceptable substitute. Again, do you agree or disagree and why?
5. A third theme relates to what officers need shortly after promotion to RC G/FO as relates to joint matters, primarily CAPSTONE and JPME (for those that have not had a joint assignment). Do you agree or disagree? Why? What would you add or subtract from the list?

**Earlier interviews suggested several obstacles facing DoD related to improving RC G/FOs performance in joint matters:**

1. These obstacles include insufficient funds for training, both service-specific and joint, not enough slots for joint PME, separate (as opposed to integrated) training, state boundary constraints on Guard assignments, and AC distrust. Do you agree and disagree and why?
2. Are some of the obstacles more challenging than others? Why?
3. What are ways to overcome these obstacles?

**From the interviews, we have deduced recommendations in three broad categories: RC joint officer management, assignments, and education/training. Let's review them, critique them, and discuss ways for implementing them:**

4. RC G/FO management for joint positions
  - a. What are the characteristics of an effective RC G/FO management system for joint positions and people?
    - i. Is such a system needed? Why or why not?
    - ii. Should the system manage the flow of people to and from joint and/or other key positions?
  - b. Should an office(s) be established with these responsibilities?
    - i. Where should it (they) be located? (OSD, Joint Staff, each service?)
    - ii. What and how much authority should be vested in such an office?
5. Assignments
  - a. How would the system identify the appropriate high-potential RC field-grade officers for broadening into the "joint" arena?
  - b. How would the system ensure RC players get appropriate experiences?
  - c. How much active-duty time is needed for acceptable performance in joint G/FO matters: Active Guard Reserve (AGRs)? Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs)? Traditional Reservists?
  - d. What office(s) would manage these activities?
6. Education/training
  - a. What's needed to conduct more integrated AC-RC joint education and training?
  - b. Do you have examples of education/training changes that should be made in the near term?

**With respect to performance of RC G/FOs in joint matters, have we missed any important topics?**

7. What topic? Why important? What would be recommendation to DoD? How would it be implemented?

## **Senior Noncommissioned Officer Focus Group Protocol**

The protocol below was used as a read-ahead for focus group sessions as well as a guide during the sessions. As a result of the focus group sessions the findings and recommendations were refined, but the protocol presented here does not reflect those refinements.

### **Senior Noncommissioned Officers in Joint Matters**

#### **(Questions to explore during briefing)**

#### **Assessment Review:**

1. During the first phase of our research we found that senior noncommissioned officers (SNCOs) serving in joint positions require competencies similar to their service counterparts. However, our interviews indicate that joint SNCO leadership roles also require proficiency in additional areas—most particularly those involved in managing interservice, interagency, and partner relationships. Our research further suggests that SNCO preparation for joint leadership positions currently suffers from insufficient opportunity to receive joint education; insufficient institutional support for the acquisition of joint experience; and the lack of a career management system to integrate and structure educational and assignment experiences into a career path. Do you agree or disagree? Why? What would you add or subtract from the list?

#### **Earlier interviews resulted in several themes for improving SNCO performance in joint matters:**

2. One of the themes that emerged from our interviews is that SNCOs should be provided training in joint matters significantly earlier in their careers, in greater numbers, and with greater frequency. Specifically: many of our interviewees believe basic instruction in jointness, including familiarization with the structures, roles, and missions of other services, should begin as early as at the E-6 level; and that more noncommissioned officers should experience immersion in a variety of shared educational environments. Do you agree or disagree and why?

3. Another theme relates to the importance of developmental assignments, i.e., prior work in a joint environment, with many interviewees noting that early exposure to joint work, and to the structures and cultures of other services, greatly advances a senior NCO's level of preparation to assume a joint leadership position later on. Considerable shortfalls were identified in the number of such opportunities available to young NCOs, however, and in the level of institutional support and encouragement provided for their pursuit. Again, do you agree or disagree and why?
4. A third theme relates to the need for a centralized, integrated enlisted officer career management component in OSD. Indeed, many interviewees noted the disparity between the structures, and legal and policy underpinnings that systematize the training, education, promotion, and assignments of general and flag officers, versus the absence of similar entities for SNCOs. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

**Earlier interviews suggested several obstacles facing DoD related to improving SNCO performance in joint matters:**

5. These obstacles include: Resource constraints—providing educational and developmental assignment opportunities costs the services money and productivity, because schools must be funded, and demanding assignment cycles too often leave parent-service seats unfilled; and the perception that even high-achieving SNCOs that pursue non-service-specific experiences will be “punished” or “left behind” by their parent service after joint duty. Do you agree and disagree and why?
6. Are some of the obstacles more challenging than others? Why?
7. What are ways to overcome these obstacles?

**From the interviews, we have deduced recommendations in three broad categories: Joint Education and Training; Joint Experience; and Joint Career Management. Let's review them and critique them.**

**With respect to performance of SNCO in joint matters, have we missed any important topics?**

8. What topic? Why important? What would be recommendation to DoD? How would it be implemented?



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